Exposition

OF THE

Epistles to Timothy

BY

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Preface

THE basis of the notes which appear in the following pages on the two Epistles to Timothy, was a series of Lectures given at the St. Andrews Convention in July, 1923. These have been extended so as to form a running Commentary on the Epistles, which is now issued in the earnest hope that the book may provide a little help towards the exposition of this portion of the Word of God. The importance of these Pastoral Epistles lies especially in the instruction they give on the character, testimony, and care of local churches, God's lamps of witness in a world of darkness.

Some outline lists on the leading subjects referred to in the Epistles are added from a little volume of such outlines which appeared a few years ago. They are intended to take up each reference to these subjects in the Epistles in view, and may prove serviceable as topical notes for those who are called to give instruction in the Scriptures. The notes are intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.

There are so many intimations in these two Epistles as to the sufficiency and finality of the Scriptures that an Appendix has been added on this subject, and references to this is made in the various places in the text.

The realisation in some measure of the solemn responsibility of handling the Word of God leads the writer to pray that the work taken in hand may meet His approval and be of some assistance to His servants in the knowledge of Himself and of His will, and in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. W.E.V.

BATH, 1925.

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An Approximate Chronology of the Life of the Apostle Paul

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INTRODUCTION.

THE two Epistles to Timothy and that to Titus are called the Pastoral Epistles, because they consist largely of instructions relating to pastoral work in the churches. That they were written in the closing period of Paul's life is clear both from the reference to his own circumstances, and from the character of his remarks upon the false teachers of the time and their teachings. Apparently the Judaistic errors with which the Apostle deals in Galatians and Colossians had developed into still more corrupt forms. Those who taught them had not only failed to understand the Divine purposes in the Law (1. 7), but had thrust away a good conscience, had made shipwreck concerning the faith (1. 19), and, corrupted in mind, had become covetous and immoral (6. 5; cp. Titus 1. 11, 16; 2 Tim 3. 6).

From the first Epistle we gather that Timothy was at Ephesus, and that it was the Apostle's wish that he should remain there still (1. 3, 4, R.V.). Possibly Paul, after his first release from Rome, had visited Ephesus with Timothy, and had left him there, going himself into Macedonia. The state of things in the churches in Ephesus and the district called for pastoral discipline, which involved

heavy responsibility. Apparently the evil teachers and workers, whose presence Paul had predicted to the elders at his farewell message at Miletus, had begun their work. Accordingly the Apostle's object is to give instruction to Timothy concerning the correction of these evils, and the maintenance of godly order in, and a good witness by, the church. This he states in so many words as the reason why he is writing: "These things write I unto thee," he says, "hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (3. 14, 15, R.V.). We should note that his instructions were not merely as to how Timothy was to behave himself in the House of God (as in A.V.), but how all believers were to conduct themselves. That the Revisers give the correct rendering here is confirmed by the contents of the Epistle in general. There are instructions, for instance, concerning the character and conduct of men (2. 8), women (2. 9, 15), bishops (3. 1-3), deacons (3. 8-13), widows and children (5. 4-16), servants (6. 1, 2), and the rich (6. 17-19), and all with the object that the church may maintain a good witness in the world.

Indeed the teaching of the Epistle amounts to this, that local churches are God's witnesses, both in doctrine and practice. The truth is to be maintained

in its purity, and the conduct of believers is to be characterized by godliness. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth (3. 15). Some would connect these words with what follows, and read the passage thus: "The pillar and ground of the truth and incontrovertibly great is the mystery of godliness." This, however, while just possible as a translation, is somewhat forced, and is not borne out by the tenor of the Epistle, which supports the usual rendering.

The Epistle, then, contains no mention of the relationship of believers as children of God, the subject throughout is testimony in the world.

Consistently with the maintenance of the truth on the part of the church, the Apostle states certain fundamental doctrines of the faith. These are not set forth as a creed, but occur in various parts of the Epistle in accordance with the particular phase of the subject in hand.

The first is, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This the Apostle states in the introductory part of the Epistle, in speaking of the mercy of God in saving him and putting him into His service. At the same time the doctrine is stated in its relationship to God's dealings with man in general.

The second is, "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and man, Himself Man, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all" (2. 5, 6).

This is given as the proof of the fact that "God willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," a result largely dependent on the prayers and testimony of the churches.

The third has to do with the "mystery of godliness." It is definitely connected with the corporate testimony of the church as the pillar and ground of the truth, and speaks of Christ as the One Who "was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (3. 16).

The fourth occurs in the Apostle's closing charge to Timothy, which he is to fulfil in view of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrines refer to the Majesty and nature of God, as that which will be made known by Christ to all men hereafter, and which will command universal recognition. He will shew "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (6. 15, 16).

All these are foundation truths of the faith to be held and maintained by the church. But the Epistle teaches that they cannot be so maintained apart from godly order in the assembly, and a consistent witness of godliness of life and testimony in the world.

THE MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE EPISTLE.

I. Introduction, ... 1. 1-4
II. The Church, Manward, ... 1. 5-20
III. The Church, Godward—Prayer and Conduct, ... 2. 1-15
IV. The Church, Inward—Overseers, Deacons and the Faith, ... 3. 1-16
V. A Charge Concerning the Church, .. 4. 1-16
VI. A Charge Concerning the Church Members, ... 5. 1-6. 2
VII. A Charge Concerning Timothy, .. 6. 3-16
VIII. Concluding Instructions, ... 6. 17-end

Outlines of Some Leading Subjects referred to in the Epistle.

(I) GOD.

I. **His Nature**:

1. Eternal, ... 1. 17
2. Incorruptible, ... 1. 17, R.V.
3. Invisible, ... 1. 17; 6. 16
4. Absolute, ... 1. 17; 6. 16
5. The Living One, ... 3. 15; 4. 10
6. Immortal, ... 6. 16
7. Light, ... 6. 16

II. **His Position**:

1. Sovereign, ... 1. 17; 6. 15
2. Creator, ... 4. 3, 4
3. Saviour, ... 1. 1; 2. 3
4. Life-Giver, ... 6. 13
5. Giver of good things, ... 6. 17

III. **The Source of**:

1. Grace, mercy, peace, ... 1. 2
2. The Gospel, ... 1. 11
3. Christian service, .. 1. 11, 12, R.V.
4. Christian testimony, ... 6. 1

IV. **The Object of**

1. Worship, ... 1. 17
*2. Hope, ... 4. 10; 5. 5; 6. 17

V. **The Church is His**

1. Possession, ... 3. 5; 3. 15
2. House, ... 3. 15

VI. **He is the Observer of His servants**, ... 5. 21; 6. 13

VII. **His will, for**

1. His people, ... 2. 3
2. All men, ... 2. 4
3. Children, ... 5. 4

* "Hope set on God" three times in this Epistle.

(II) THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I. **His Person and Work:**

1. His Equality with the Father, .. 1. 2
2. His Deity, ... 3. 16
3. His Incarnation, ... 3. 16
4. His Humanity, ... 2. 5
5. His Testimony, ... 6. 13
6. His Death, ... 2. 6
7. His Resurrection, ... 3. 16
8. His Ascension, ... 3. 16
9. His Mediatorship, ... 2. 5

II. **The Source of:**

1. Apostleship, ... 1. 1
2. Gospel ministry, .. 1. 11, 12; 4. 6
3. Christian doctrine, ... 6. 3
4. Grace, ... 1. 2, 14
5. Mercy, ... 1. 2
6. Peace, ... 1. 2
7. Salvation, ... 1. 15
8. Life, ... 1. 16

III. **The Subject of the Gospel,** 3. 16

IV. **The Object of**

1. Faith, ... 1. 14, 16; 3. 16
2. Love, ... 1. 14

V. **The Embodiment of**
1. The faith, ... **3. 13**
2. The mystery of godliness, .. **3. 16**

VI. **The Observer of the ways of His servants,** **5. 21; 6. 13**

VII. **His First Advent and its purposes,** **1. 15; 3. 16**

VIII. **His present attitude toward men—longsuffering,** **1. 16**

IX. **His Second Advent and its purposes, 6. 14, 15**

(III) FAITH

I. is the means of spiritual life, .. **1. 2. R.V.**
II. is the response to God's grace, ... **1. 14**
III. has Christ as its object, ... **3. 16**
IV. is characteristic of God's children, **4. 12; 5. 16; 6. 2**
V. is the basis of edification, ... **1. 4**
VI. is the basis of teaching, ... **2. 7**
VII. is expressed in love, ... **1. 5**
VIII. is the companion of love, ... **1. 14**
IX. is to be pursued, ... **6. 11**
X. is to be maintained, ... **2. 15; 5. 12**
XI. is to be evidenced as an example to others, ... **4. 12**
XII. there is danger in swerving from it, .. **1. 6**

(IV) THE FAITH.

I. Christians are to

1. be nourished in the words of .. 4. 6
2. hold the mystery of 3. 9
3. be bold in 3. 13
4. fight the good fight of .. 6. 12. R.V.

II. Christians are not to

5. make shipwreck concerning .. 1. 19
6. fall away from 4. 1
7. deny 5. 8
8. be led aside from 6. 10
9. err concerning 6. 21

(V) CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.

I. On the part of

1. Men, ... 2. 8
2. Women, .. 2. 9, 15; 3. 11; 5. 16
3. Overseers, 3. 1-7; 5. 17, 19; cp. 4. 12-16; 5. 21, 22
4. Deacons, ... 3. 8-13
5. Children, ... 3. 4; 5. 4
6. Widows, ... 5. 5, 6, 9-15
7. Householders, ... 5. 8
8. Servants, ... 6. 1, 2
9. The Rich, ... 6. 17-19

II. **In**:

1. the World, ... 3. 7
2. the Church, ... 3. 15

III. **Its duty**, ...2. 2, 3

IV. **Its means of maintenance**:

1. The Word of God, ... 1. 18, 19
2. Faith, ... 1. 19
3. A good conscience, ... 1. 19

V. **Its bearing on prayer**, ... 2. 8

VI. **Its character**:

1. Love, ... 1. 5
2. Righteousness, ... 6. 11
3. Godliness, ... 6. 11
4. Faith, ... 6. 11
5. Love, ... 6. 11
6. Patience, ... 6. 11
7. Meekness, ... 6. 11
8. Contentment, ... 6. 6
9. Good works, ... 6. 18

VII. **Its aims**:

1. The honour of the Name of God, .. 6. 1
2. Eternal life, ... 6. 12
3. The Time to come, ... 6. 19

VIII. **Its results, here and hereafter,** 4. 8; 6. 6

IX. **Its goal—the Appearing of Christ,** .. 6. 14

X. **Its foes:**

1. Satan, ... 5. 15
2. Seducing spirits, ... 4. 1
3. Fables, ... 4. 7
4. False teachers, ... 4. 2
5. Engrossment in pleasure, ... 5. 6
6. Neglect of duty, ... 5. 13
7. Idleness, ... 5. 13
8. Gossip, ... 5. 13
9. Pride, ... 6. 4
10. Strife, ... 6. 4
11. Avarice, ... 6. 9
12. Anti-spiritual knowledge, .. 6. 20

(VI) THE GOSPEL.

I. Its Nature, ... 1. 11
II. Its Message, ... 1. 15; 2. 6
III. Its Object, ... 2. 4
IV. Its Time, ... 2. 6
V. Its Subject, ... 2. 5; 3. 16

(VII) PRAYER.

I. Its Duty, ... 2. 1, 8
II. Its Subjects, ... 2. 1, 2
III. Its Objects, ... 2. 2
IV. Its Acceptableness, ... 2. 3
V. Its Reasons, ... 2. 4, 5

OUTLINE NOTES.

CHAPTER I.

THIS chapter has four sections:

(*a*) Introductory greetings and exhortation (vv. 1-4).

(*b*) Instruction as to the necessity for a sound gospel (vv. 5-11).

(*c*) Paul's apostolic calling (vv. 12-17).

(*d*) The charge to Timothy (vv. 18-20)

I. Introduction—1. 1-4.

(*a*) Verses 1-4. Introductory greetings and exhortation.

In the opening greeting Paul speaks of his apostleship as having been "according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our Hope." The title "Saviour" is characteristic of these closing pastoral Epistles. The Apostle had by this time had a long experience of the delivering and preserving power of the Lord, amidst all his vicissitudes and perils. The frequent mention of the title "Saviour" was perhaps, then, the effect of the Lord's gracious care of His servant.

When on a past occasion he was about to go into Macedonia he had exhorted Timothy to remain at Ephesus that he might see to the maintenance of

sound doctrine in the church there. The danger of false teachings still required his presence in the city, and Paul encourages him to go on amidst the difficulties with which he was faced, and to fulfil the responsibility devolving upon him. The tendency to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, gnostic speculations, *e.g.*, as to emanations and genealogies of spirits, was detrimental to the fulfilment of a stewardship received from God in the ministry of the gospel. It was needful, therefore, for Timothy to abstain from all such things and to charge the dupes of a different doctrine to adhere to the truth.

II. The Church, Manward—1. 5-20.

(*b*) **Verses 5-11. Instruction as to the necessity for a sound gospel.**

In the second section the Apostle states the aim of his mandate to Timothy; it stands in contrast to the effects of the doctrines of the false teachers. The purpose in view is love, springing from a pure heart, a good conscience and faith unfeigned. It was thus to be void of the subtle arguments arising from human speculations. Vain talking of this sort never leads into the presence of the Lord, nor does it act on the heart and conscience.

These evils arose not only from the activities of schools of philosophy, but also from the persistent propaganda of those relentless enemies of the Apostle

the Judaizers, advocates of a mixture of law and grace. They posed as teachers of the Law, albeit they were void of understanding regarding it. Paul is always careful to maintain the inherent perfection of the Law, while declaring its inefficiency as a means of justification and life. "The Law is good," he says, "if a man use it lawfully." It is good because it is an expression of the character of God Himself. Both the Law and the gospel are against sin. Both reveal the glory of God. The gospel does not tolerate sin any more than the Law. This the Apostle makes clear when he says that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless, unruly and ungodly, etc., for whatsoever is contrary to the sound doctrine "according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (vv. 10, 11). So the gospel and the Law are contrary to the same thing. The phrase, "the gospel of the glory of God" is indicative, not of the quality of the gospel, but of its topic. The Law showed the glory of God in revealing His holiness, the gospel shows the glory of His righteousness and grace.

The term "blessed" is used of God also in 6. 15 of this same Epistle, and only in these two places in the New Testament. God is supremely blessed as being the source of all blessedness. It may be that in this title the Apostle is hinting at the curse under which those exist who are under the Law. This gospel has been 'committed to his trust', and what he states about it here shows that it is of a permanent

character; it was never to be subjected to the slightest modification or addition. (*See Appendix.*)

(*c*) **Verses 12-17. Paul's apostolic calling.**

This leads him to speak of the sovereign grace by which he was appointed to the service of the gospel, and to show how and why he obtained mercy. As to the "how", Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom he was the chief; as to the "why", he obtained mercy that in him, "as chief", Jesus Christ might show forth all His longsuffering as an ensample of future believers. We must note the significance of the changed order in the titles of Christ. "Christ Jesus" came into the world to save sinners; that order takes our thoughts from Heaven to earth; it describes the exalted One Who emptied Himself, and testifies to His pre-existence. The order "Jesus Christ" takes us from earth to Heaven, and describes the despised and rejected One Who afterwards was glorified; it testifies to His resurrection. The former order indicates His grace, the latter His glory.

The wonders of the grace of God constrain the Apostle to burst out in a doxology to Him Who had shown him such mercy: "Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen". This conveys to us (1) His sovereignty—He is the King; (2) His unoriginated and unending being—He is eternal;

(3) His holiness and purity—He is incorruptible; (4) His imperceptibility to sight—He is invisible; (5) the absoluteness of His Deity—He is the only God.

(*d*) **Verses 18-20. The charge to Timothy.**

In the fourth section, recalling his charge to Timothy, he reminds him of the prophecies which led the way to him. Probably this refers to utterances, either by Paul himself or others, in the exercise of the prophetic gift in the church, by which Timothy was indicated as one whom the Holy Spirit had chosen for the special work committed to him in connection with the Apostle. These prophecies were to be a means of strength to him in the conflict inevitable to his service. They were calculated to enable him "to hold faith and a good conscience". Some, like Hymenæus and Alexander, had thrust these away from them, making shipwreck of the faith. In our Christian life we are instructed and warned both by the teaching of Scripture and by the solemn example of those who depart from the faith and come under the retributive discipline of God.

III. The Church, Godward—Prayer and Conduct—2. 1-15.

CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter has two sections: (*a*) vv. 1-7, an exhortation to prayer and the reason therefor; (*b*) vv. 8-15, the conduct necessary in believers.

(*a*) Verses 1-7. An exhortation to prayer and the reason therefor.

Having given a general charge to Timothy, the Apostle now begins a series of exhortations relating to his main subject, namely, the maintenance of a witness for God by the local church. And "first of all" (note the position of the words, as in R.V.) he exhorts that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in high place."

But why should his first exhortation be to prayer? Is there not an intimation that it is a service at once the most important and the one most liable to be neglected? The context shows that this exhortation has as its ultimate object the maintenance of testimony to the truth of the gospel. On the one hand, the "therefore" in the opening verse points back to the denial of the faith by some who have made shipwreck of it, such as Hymenæus and Alexander. On the other hand, the reason for the prime urgency of prayer for rulers is that such national conditions may prevail that men may be saved and brought to a knowledge of the truth, the testimony to which is to be given by the churches.

Let us notice carefully the sequence of thought. Firstly, the reason why we are to pray for men and those in authority over them, is that we may lead "a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity."

The attitude of rulers towards Christianity affects their subjects generally. The supplications of believers have in view, then, that they may live amidst national quietness, and in conformity to the character and will of God.

Secondly, the reason for this is that it is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (verse 3). It is well pleasing to Him that instead of upheaval and strife the work of the churches should be carried on under conditions favourable to it.

Thirdly, behind this lies His goodwill toward the unsaved. He "willeth that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (verse 4). Salvation and the knowledge of the truth! How necessary to associate the two, and not to submit to human restrictions in teaching the Word of God, nor to be subject to an understanding, tacit or otherwise, that doctrines deemed to be controversial are to be withheld!

Fourthly, in connection with "the truth" the Apostle now states, in his chain of reasoning, the great basic doctrines of the faith, and shows that there was a special time appointed for its testimony. The reason for all he has been saying is that "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself Man, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times." Here is a compendium of foundation doctrine relating to the plans of God's grace toward

mankind, the truth of which was intended to be maintained by the churches, that it might permeate the world, lead to the conversion of men, and bring them to a knowledge of God, amidst conditions of peace and godliness. All this, then, is the reason why the churches are to supplicate for men generally and for their rulers.

The doctrines thus stated require careful consideration. We should note first the catholicity of salvation. It is not the special privilege of any particular nation. God willeth to have *all men* to be saved. The next great truth, underlying this, is the unity of the Godhead. "There is one God." This is far more than a statement of the monotheism of God, it sets forth the attributes of His self-existence, His consistency, and His supremacy. Belief in the Trinity does not involve the acknowledgment of three Gods.

We do worship the Father and the Son by the Spirit, and this the Scripture teaches us to do, but it also teaches that there is an inseparable unity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a unity of the Three in the one Godhead. The equality of the Son with the Father is here implied; for what is predicated of the One is likewise predicated of the Other. "There is one God, one Mediator also." Now it is essential to mediatorship that he who acts in this capacity should fully understand the circumstances of the parties between whom he is mediating.

The condition is fulfilled absolutely in the case of Christ. He is not only one with the Father in Deity, He is also "Himself Man." This predicates His humanity, and at the same time the addition of the word "Himself" points by implication to His Deity.

The perfections of His Mediatorship consist not only in the combination of His Deity and His Manhood, but in this also, that He "gave Himself a ransom for all." The word *antilutron*, "ransom," suggests that the character of the ransom was substitutionary; *lutron* is a ransom; *anti* is "instead of"; but the word rendered "for" is *huper*, which denotes "on behalf of," not "instead of." Scripture nowhere states that Christ died *instead of* all men. What is here stated is that Christ gave Himself as a substitutionary ransom on behalf of all men. The ransom was provided for all men, it is made good for those who accept God's salvation; Christ died *instead of* them. The only places where *anti*, "instead of," is used are in Mark 10. 45 and the corresponding passage in Matthew, and there Christ says that He, the Son of Man, came to give His life a ransom *instead of many*, (*i.e.*, instead of those who believe). He does not say 'instead of all.' Where the whole world is in view His work is said to be *on behalf of all*. All will not take the place that God requires them to take, and so are not removed from death and condemnation. Those who do accept God's conditions are delivered from that state. Christ was condemned and died

for all men, and *instead of* many. That is the language of Scripture.

The second great declaration of fundamental truth is an expansion of the first, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1. 15). All this is the faith concerning which we are not to make shipwreck but which we are to uphold, and that this soul-saving testimony may be given in peace and quietness is to be a matter of prayer in the churches continually.

(*b*) **Verses 8-15. The conduct necessary in believers.**

That leads the Apostle to speak of the need of godliness in the churches. First as to the men, they are to pray "lifting up holy hands." That is to say, their prayers must be accompanied by godliness of life. The subject here is not as to whether women may pray as well as men; what the Apostle is enjoining is the need of holiness on the part of each and all. The men are to pray, then, in every place with holy hands. Outstretching the hands toward God is mere empty formality if behind it there is not holiness of character. Prayer is to be "without wrath and disputing." To pray with anger in the heart against a brother is mockery. What is the use of praying for conditions of peace, for instance, if we have feelings of enmity in our own hearts?

We are next told how the women are to take part in maintaining the faith. They are to adorn them-

selves with modest apparel, "with shamefastness (note the correct R.V. spelling) and sobriety,"—that is to say, they are not to overstep the bounds of womanly modesty,—"not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works." The word rendered "sobriety" means sound judgment, *i.e.*, a well balanced state of mind, resulting from habitual self-restraint. The women are also exhorted to learn in quietness and subjection. The Apostle says "I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." For such statements Paul has been charged with prejudice against women. There could not be a greater mistake. Moreover, we may not read the Epistle merely in the light of what kind of a man Paul was. His teaching consists of the Word of God and not merely of his own ideas. The reasons given for this injunction are (*a*) the order of God's creation of man—"Adam was first formed, then Eve" (verse 13). The Apostle vindicates, by the way, the historicity of the Genesis record. (*b*) Eve, the second in creation, was the first in transgression—"Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." Consequent upon that transgression God declared that the woman would bring forth children with sorrow. Now says the Apostle, "she shall be saved by means of the child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and love and sanctification

with sobriety." Some have taken this to refer to the Virgin birth of Christ. Does not Paul mean that the woman shall have her place in helping to maintain the witness of the church in the world? On the one hand, by begetting children she would be saved from becoming a prey to the vices which characterized the world of that day, and which are reproduced in our time. On the other hand, the woman who brings up a family for God takes an important part in the maintenance of the testimony of the church.

IV. The Church, Inward—Overseers, Deacons and The Faith—3. 1-16.

CHAPTER III.

THE third chapter has three sections: (*a*) vv. 1-7, the necessary qualifications of a bishop; (*b*) vv. 8-13, the necessary qualifications of deacons; (*c*) vv. 14-16, Paul's object in writing the Epistle.

(*a*) Verses 1-7. The necessary qualifications of a bishop.

In the second chapter injunctions were given as to the conduct of all believers, both men and women. Since the church is under pastoral care, the Apostle next lays down the necessary qualifications of those who are appointed to look after its welfare. For in maintaining a witness for God in the world, it is of

special importance that the lives and ministry of those who care for the church should be of a character necessary for the testimony to be given.

Firstly, as to the bishops, or overseers (the latter word is simply a translation of the former), "if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (ver. 1). There is no mention of an office in the original, either here or in connection with the deacons. Perhaps we might coin a word and translate by "seeketh overseership." He who engages in this work must be "without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, soberminded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil." He who has the care of the church must himself be an example of all that believers should be in daily life.

"Bishop," "elder" and "pastor" are three descriptions of the same person. When Paul said farewell to the "elders" of the church at Ephesus, he reminded them that the Holy Ghost had made them "bishops" to feed (or rather to shepherd, *i.e.*, to act as pastors over) the church (Acts 20. 28, with ver. 17). See

also Titus 1. 5 and 6, with verse 7, and 1 Peter 5. 1-3. We may note in this connection that the New Testament knows nothing of the existence of one bishop or pastor over a church. The churches were invariably provided, so far as New Testament evidence is concerned, with a plurality of bishops or elders. In addition to the above passages, see Acts 14. 23, Phil. 1. 1, 1 Thess. 5. 12. The use of the singular in 1 Timothy 3. 1, 2, and Titus 1. 7, is simply by way of describing the character necessary in the case of one who engages in such work.

The qualifications enumerated all have this in view, that the life testimony of those in responsibility in churches may be consistent with the Name of God, and the doctrines of the faith. Such men must be without reproach both in private and public life. If they were married (the passage does not suggest that marriage was a necessary qualification) they must show by the godly government and care of their own household that they are suited in this respect to care for the House of God. Polygamists were barred.

(*b*) **Verses 8-13. The necessary qualifications of deacons.**

As to the deacons, the Apostle gives a command which is absent in respect of the bishops. Deacons are first to be proved; "then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless" (ver. 10). Regarding the

character of their service, we may gather from Acts 6 that they had charge over temporal affairs, such as the handling of funds. It is true that the men spoken of in Acts 6 are not called deacons, but the qualifications there mentioned, and the circumstantial evidences, suggest that their ministry was diaconal. The injunction as to their being first proved suggests a difference in the mode of their appointment from that of the bishops. To the giver of a gift belongs the prerogative of appointing the instrument of its ministration. Bishops or elders are spiritual gifts bestowed by the Lord Himself upon the Church, of which He is the Head; "He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," Eph. 4. 11. The appointment of such does not lie therefore with a church, nor is there a hint of such a thing in the New Testament. The Apostolic appointment of elders was clearly a temporary arrangement, and amounted to the public nomination, by Apostles or their delegates, of those who had already been raised up by the Spirit of God to engage in pastoral work. It was for the church to recognize the Divine appointment, whether the latter was made through Apostolic instrumentality, or apart from it. In writing to the church in Thessalonica, the Apostle says: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you" (1 Thess. 5. 12). That they were diligently engaged in their service was a

sufficient indication as to their qualification and appointment. The Divine operation in and through them required recognition on the part of the church.

Not so with the deacons. They were to be under a term of probation. First the proving, and then the approval. The church was to "look out" such men and appoint them to their service, and here the principle above mentioned is again illustrated. Monetary offerings were the gifts of the church for the poor, and for the service of God in general. In accordance with the principle stated above, it therefore lay with the church to choose those who were to handle its funds. But the handling of church funds is to be entrusted to men of proved godliness of character. There must be no occasion here for the world to reproach. The distribution of money or any other service for the church on the part of those who as deacons are its representatives, calls for men not only of strict integrity but also of tact and discretion. The wives, too, both of overseers and deacons (for it is probably to the wives of both that the Apostle refers in verse 11) must be "grave, not slanderers, temperate and faithful in all things." The work both of overseers and deacons would involve occupation to some extent in the family circumstances of other people. How needful then that the character and conduct of the wives be such that their husbands may not be brought into dishonour, and that all busybodying and idle gossip be avoided!

(*c*) Verses 14-16. Paul's object in writing the Epistle.

This section brings us to the central point of the subject of the Epistle. Here the Apostle states the object for which he wrote it. The statement is both retrospective and prospective. He says: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that (*i.e.*, I am writing in order that) thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth" (vv. 14, 15). He is not merely instructing Timothy as to his conduct. The literal rendering for "how men ought to behave themselves" is, 'how it is necessary to behave.' Since he has already given injunctions as to the conduct of men, women, overseers and deacons and their wives, and has more to say on such matters further on in the Epistle, the translation "how men (*i.e.*, all believers) ought to behave themselves" is plainly right. "The House of God" and "the Church of the Living God" are terms expressive of high dignity. Those who are called into a position of such spiritual honour and privilege are under an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of it.

The witness of the local church is, as we have seen, twofold; it is a testimony both of right living and of right teaching, of doctrine as well as of manner of life. The truth is to be maintained in both

respects. The church is therefore here called "the pillar and ground of the truth." Grammatically it is possible, as we stated in the introduction, to take this with what follows, that is, as describing the mystery of godliness. But such a connection is unlikely. That the phrase describes the church is in keeping with the context and with the whole tenor of the Epistle.

At the close of this section the Apostle passes from the necessity of godliness to its perfect embodiment in Christ, reminding his readers that what is essential in the conduct of believers had been realised in the Person of the Lord. This is "the mystery of godliness,"—not something mysterious, but truth which God makes known especially to believers, and which can be apprehended by them alone.

It should be borne in mind that in giving the details of this mystery Paul is not formulating a creed. He is not even declaring the Deity of Christ as an article of the faith. His thoughts easily turn from the subject immediately in hand to the Person whom he loves to serve. He first states the Lord's Incarnation and Resurrection. He was "manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit." The latter was the counterpart of the former. His sinlessness was vindicated by His resurrection. Therein He was justified. He was raised from the dead "according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1. 4). It was

impossible for Him to be holden of death. Resurrection was His prerogative, for He had completely fulfilled the Law of God in the days of His flesh. Life was promised as the reward of the one who fulfilled the Law. Yet He died. His death was therefore voluntary and vicarious. In raising Him from the dead the Father declared the unique glory of His Divine Sonship and the moral perfection of His character.

Thus in the first two statements we see godliness manifested and vindicated. The third declares that He was seen of angels. This may refer to His manifestation both in the days of His flesh and in His resurrection. Angels had been with Him and had attended upon Him in the former period, and subsequently bore witness to His resurrection.

Fourthly, He was "preached among the nations." It was a Person Who was preached, not a creed; not godliness as a religious idea, but godliness incarnate in the Son, incarnate with the one great purpose of the redemption of man.

Fifthly, He was "believed on in the world." This follows the preceding statement in appropriate order. The object of preaching is to bring men to faith in Christ. "Our testimony among you was believed," said Paul to the Thessalonians.

Sixthly, He was "received up in glory." This was the assured and fitting climax to His life of perfect godliness on earth, and His work of redeeming

grace on the cross. 'He had glorified the Father on the earth, having finished the work which He gave Him to do.' In Him, then, godliness has been manifested, vindicated, enthroned. 'Incontrovertibly great is the mystery of godliness.'

V. A Charge concerning The Church—4. 1-16.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS chapter has two sections: (*a*) vv. 1-5, apostasy from the faith, (*b*) vv. 6-16, exhortations to Timothy concerning godliness and concerning his ministry.

(*a*) Verses 1-5. Apostasy from the faith.

At the close of the third chapter we were shown (1), the necessity of godliness (ver. 15) and (2), its embodiment in Christ (ver. 16). The fourth chapter treats of (3), the denial of godliness (vv. 1-5) and (4), its value (vv. 6-16).

In antithesis to the great truths relating to Christ at the end of the third chapter the Apostle speaks now of the "doctrines of demons." The third chapter states the doctrines of the faith; the fourth speaks of departure from it, and gives the express prediction of the Spirit, that in later times there would be an apostasy as a result of the influence of seducing spirits. Not infrequently in Scripture those passages which testify to the Son of God contain also

a warning against some form of spiritism. Satanic opposition is ever directed against Christ. Seducing spirits lead to denial of the faith, and denial of the faith leads to ungodliness, with the result that the Lord's Name is blasphemed.

The second verse mentions the human instruments through whom the spirits of darkness act. They are "men who speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron." Contrast with this the "pure conscience" in which the mystery of the faith is to be held (ver. 9). Certain details are now foretold concerning the false teaching of these apostates. They would forbid to marry. The word rendered "forbidding" usually denotes "to hinder"; so we may translate by "hindering marriage." They would also command to abstain from meats. It is significant that these two are characteristic features of Romanism, which has enforced the celibacy of the clergy, and abstention from meat on certain days. The same features also characterize the teaching of spiritism, which advocates the abandonment of the marriage bond and the adoption of vegetarianism.

Paul reminds the saints that "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the Word of God and prayer." This provides the reason why we should give thanks for our food. It is not to be used for the gratification of our lusts, but to be received as a gift from God, and as such it

is a means of bringing us into touch with Him. The Word of God has sanctioned our receiving animal food as from Him, apart from Jewish ordinances and distinctions. The doctrines inculcated by these seducing spirits are a slight upon the character of God, and are calculated to lead to doubts as to His love and providence. Timothy was to remind believers of these things as one who had been nourished in the words of the faith (ver. 6). The words of the faith are a safeguard against apostasy.

(*b*) Verses 6-16. Exhortations to Timothy concerning godliness and concerning his ministry.

The latter part of this chapter consists of exhortations, particularly to Timothy, in view of the extremely responsible and difficult task devolving upon him. He was to refuse "profane and old wives' fables," the mythological legends and superstitious ideas which were prevalent in those days, and from the influence of which the churches were in danger. On the other hand, he was to exercise himself unto godliness. That which it was his duty to enjoin upon others he must himself practise continually.

Here the Apostle contrasts the value of the exercise of godliness with that of bodily exercise. The latter is "profitable for a little," *i.e.*, so far as pertains to this life. The body of the believer is the Lord's possession. Whatever physical exercise is taken, it

should have as its aim the maintenance of mind and body as the Lord's instruments, placed at His disposal for His service. Let the exercise be regulated both in character and amount with this in view. Then the profit there is in the exercise will be turned to the Lord's account.

While bodily exercise is profitable for this life "godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." It has promise of this life because it brings the highest present happiness; the one who exercises himself in godliness enjoys communion with God, and goes from strength to strength. He learns to know His God, and this knowledge brings to Him the Divine power which has granted him "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1. 3). His life becomes filled with Christ and Christ is magnified in His body.

That is how godliness is profitable in this life. For this very reason it is also profitable for the life that is to come. For the believer who so lives here will have the greater capacity to serve the Lord in His eternal Kingdom hereafter. If we only realized this more we should devote ourselves more strenuously to be godly now, making it our highest aim, our great ambition, to be well pleasing to Him. Could we but actually see what is wrapped up in those words "the promise of that life which is to come," could we be transported into the coming Kingdom of glory, we should certainly keep before us the prize of our

high calling in Christ Jesus, and determinedly abandon everything that is inconsistent with His will.

This, however, does not depend upon sight, but upon faith. It is faith that enables us to apprehend all this future glory and reward, and to live as those who realize it. Ah, what we are losing if, instead of responding to His love, we go in for self-gratification!

This word about godliness is one of the "faithful (or trustworthy) sayings, and worthy of all acceptation." It was experimental in Paul's own case, and he associates Timothy with him in reminding him that they laboured and strove for this very end, "because," he says, "we have our hope set on the living God, Who is the Saviour (*i.e.*, Preserver) of all men, specially of them that believe." His providential arrangements and good gifts above mentioned are proof of this. Our present experience of His love and care lead us to set our hope confidently on Him as to the future. In this special sense "probation worketh hope," and this provides incentives to unremitting labour in the exercise of godliness.

The remaining exhortations of the chapter have to do with Timothy's public ministry and manner of life. The Apostle's injunction "let no man despise thy youth" does not suggest that Timothy was quite young; he had been serving with Paul for many years in the gospel. Comparatively, however, with the age of many of those over whom he had a spiritual charge, and considering the character of the respon-

sibility devolving upon him, he would be regarded as a young man. The prevention of his being despised lay, not in the assumption of a superior dignity on his part, but in his being a pattern to believers both in speech and in conduct, in faith and in purity.

In the absence of the Apostle he was to give particular heed to reading, exhortation and doctrine. The reference is to the public reading of the Scriptures. It was not possible in those days for people attending meetings to have separate copies of the Scriptures before them as we have. Even with our privileges the greatest care is required by one who reads the Word of God in public, that he may convey the right meaning to his audience, laying the proper emphasis upon the various parts of each sentence, and pronouncing his syllables distinctly. How much greater was the need under the conditions of those early days!

Again, the gift which had been imparted to him was not to lie idle. It had been bestowed by the manifest operation of the Holy Spirit through the medium of prophetic utterance, and this was accompanied by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; not that the presbytery imparted the gift to him, but that they publicly recognized by their act what the Holy Spirit had done in his case. The exercise of his gift required constant diligence. He was commanded to give himself wholly to it that his progress might be manifest to everybody. In ministering the Word of God to others we minister to

ourselves; while enriching the souls of our hearers our own souls are therein likewise enriched, and the effect is seen in our progress in the things of God and His Word.

There is, however, one great requisite for this, and the Apostle closes this series of his exhortations by mentioning it. Timothy was to take heed to himself as well as to his teaching. The teaching would be of little value if his own life was not in accordance with it. His doctrine would be valuable and effective just as he fulfilled it in his own life. By continuing in these things he would save both himself and them that heard him. While thus inwardly conscious of having been set apart definitely and formally by God for the work committed to him, he was to devote himself to the things of the Lord with such diligence that his own spiritual life would be maintained in integrity and that this blessing would likewise be imparted to those who listened to his ministry. Saving himself he would save others also.

VI. A Charge concerning the Church Members— 5. 1 - 6. 2.

CHAPTER V.

THIS chapter has three sections: (*a*) vv. 1-2, Timothy's attitude toward various members of the church, (*b*) vv. 3-16, concerning widows, (*c*) vv. 17-25, concerning elders, and laying hands on men.

(*a*) Verses 1, 2. Timothy's attitude toward various members of the church.

In this chapter the subject assumes another phase. The Apostle now gives Timothy injunctions as to his conduct towards individual believers. An elder is not to be rebuked but to be exhorted as a father; "the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger women as sisters in all purity"—an example to be followed by all whom it may concern.

(*b*) Verses 3-16. Concerning widows.

Special injunctions are next given as to the maintenance of widows. The Epistle is occupied here again, not with the relationship of believers to God, nor with spiritual privileges and heavenly blessings, but with the moral duties which are essential to a good witness in the world. The enemy must not have just cause for casting an aspersion upon anything in the arrangements of the church, and in the lives of those who constitute it.

Widows that were widows indeed, that is to say, who were in indigent circumstances, and lacked relatives to support them, were to be maintained by church gifts. Those who had children or grandchildren (see R.V.) were to be maintained by them. A sharp distinction is drawn between the case of the genuine widow, who had her hope set on God and

continued in supplications and prayers night and day, and one who gave herself to pleasure and was therefore really dead so far as communion with God was concerned. It is impossible to be devoted to God and at the same time to live merely for the enjoyment of one's own pleasure. To maintain those whose lives were so characterized would only bring the Name of God into reproach. Again, if anyone had widows in his own family or household and did not provide for them, he had "denied the faith and was worse than an unbeliever" (infidel, as in A.V., is not the meaning), ver. 8.

A charge is next given as to the age at which a widow was to be enrolled, that is to say, put on to the list of those who were recognized by the church in the way referred to. Many expositors hold that the Apostle is now dealing with a special class of widows, who, in view of the abounding poverty and distress of the times, gave themselves to the care of orphans and similar forms of charitable service, and, on offering themselves for such work, bound themselves by a pledge that, abstaining from marriage, they would devote themselves to the service mentioned; that the strict conditions laid down had regard to this female presbytery; that younger widows who offered themselves for such service were to be refused, as they would be tempted to marry again, to the detriment of the special service they were undertaking, and thus would fall into the condemnation of rejecting their first pledge (*i.e.*, not to

marry), and succumb to the temptation of becoming idle and going from house to house as gossipers; that the younger widows, instead of being allowed to be engaged in this work, ought to marry, bear children and rule the household, so that the adversary would have no occasion to revile.

All this is possible, but there is no historical evidence for it as existing in the times of the Apostles. The charge in the 16th verse, that widows who could be relieved by others were not to be a burden to the Church, but that it was to relieve those who were widows indeed, seems to show that the Apostle is continuing the subject with which he began in verse 3. If so, then the regulations as to such, and the character of their past life, would apply merely to the duties of the church in regard to the financial support of those who were genuinely destitute and helpless.

The instruction of this passage is twofold; it relates to piety at home and in the church. Piety is something very practical; it has its roots in communion with God, its fruits are seen in the care of those who are in need, both in one's own family, and in the church and in the world; piety, note,—not charity—but love and devotion to God expressing themselves cheerfully and ungrudgingly in assisting the suffering and needy and so fulfilling the royal law, and following His footsteps Who "loved us and gave Himself up for us."

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* The word rendered "faith" in verse 12 may mean a pledge.

(*c*) Verses 17-25. Concerning elders, and laying hands on men.

Next comes a final word concerning elders, and this leads to a warning against a hasty recognition of men in public church capacity.

The elders that ruled well were to be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who laboured in the Word, and in the teaching (ver. 17). The word rendered "honour" means something more than mere respect. Paul probably had in mind its other meaning, of financial support, such as is conveyed in our word "honorarium"; for he bases his exhortation upon the precept in the Law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25. 4), and the words of the Lord, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." We may note two things in passing: (1) The 17th verse shows that there were elders who did not preach, as Paul emphasizes the case of those who laboured in the Word and in teaching. (2) He introduces the two quotations by "The Scripture saith." We gather, therefore, as the second of these quotations consists of the words of the Lord recorded in Luke 10. 7, that the Gospel of Luke had been written by this time and was reckoned as part of the Scripture, that is to say, the inspired Word of God.

There is one more thing about elders; no accusation was to be received against an elder except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. This closing

injunction in regard to those who were engaged in the pastoral work of the church is followed by an exhortation as to the public reproval of sin in the church. Those who sinned were to be reproved in the sight of all, that the rest also might be in fear, and a charge is given to Timothy to do this without prejudice or partiality.

The next injunction has to do with the recognition of those who, though being new-comers, manifested a readiness to take a public part in the church testimony. He was to lay hands on no man suddenly, and not to be partaker of other men's sins. No one was to receive public recognition who did not prove first that he was Divinely qualified for it. There is a connection between the two exhortations. To lay hands on a man who had not given the evidence of being called of God to the ministry in which he was endeavouring to take part, and so to give such a man a place in the church testimony, would be to partake of his sins, if either he turned out to be one holding false doctrine, or was found to be guilty of moral obliquity. For to lay hands on a man, whether actually or virtually, is to identify oneself with him in the service in view, and should he prove to be a moral or doctrinal delinquent, the one who was responsible for his recognition would thereby identify himself with his sin, and would bring the whole church into disrepute.

Probably we ought to connect the 24th verse with

the 22nd, and to regard as parenthetic the 23rd verse which gives Paul's instruction to Timothy to take care of his health. If he was not to lay hands on any man hastily, and was so to avoid being partaker of other men's sins, guidance would be given in regard to it. "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment." In such cases the evidence would be sufficient to guard against laying hands hastily. In other cases, says the Apostle, their sins "follow after." That is to say, they do not become manifest all at once. Hence the need of waiting so that men may prove themselves, and that it may be seen whether they are sound in the faith, and godly in their manner of life. There are those whose good works are evident, and where that is not the case they "cannot be hid." It is the humble, unostentatious man whose works eventually will inevitably reveal his character and will make room for him. The man who comes with plenty of high-sounding talk, and makes himself immediately prominent, is not thereby revealing himself as one who stands in the counsels of God, and whose inner life is possessed of the quiet but effective power that comes from constant communion with the Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

THE 6th chapter has five sections: (*a*) vv. 1, 2, concerning masters and servants, (*b*), vv. 3-10, the baneful effects of disputes and of the love of money,

(*c*) vv. 11-16, the good confession, (*d*) vv. 17-19, exhortations to the rich, (*e*) vv. 20, 21, the final charge to Timothy.

(*a*) Verses 1, 2. Concerning masters and servants.

The subject of the witness to be maintained by the local church is now taken up with regard to the relations between masters and bondservants. The latter were to count their masters worthy of all honour. If their masters were believers they were not to despise them because they were brethren in the Lord; they were rather to serve them. The word rendered "servant" here is *doulos*, that is, a bond-servant or slave, not *oiketēs*, a household servant, as in Acts 10. 7, Romans 14. 4, *e.g.*

It has been laid to the charge of the Apostle, on account of this and other statements, that he gave countenance to slavery. That imputation is quite beside the mark. Paul's one aim was to lead converts to maintain a life-testimony worthy of Christ. Christ did not commission the Apostles to interfere with existing social relations, or to seek to alter political and civil arrangements. Paul's teaching was not a matter of his countenancing slavery; what he does teach is that Christianity was not intended to put master and servant on a social equality. Servants who had unconverted masters were to show them honour. Those who had believing masters were not

to abuse this common brotherhood in Christ, but were rather the more wholeheartedly to fulfil their service. In all this the purpose is not that of giving support to slavery, but "that the Name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed."

As a matter of fact Christianity eventually did far more to change social conditions than would have been the case if its preachers and teachers had sought to interfere with them. Christianity itself is an expulsive as well as an attractive power, and it was not long in the early history of the present era, before slavery ceased to exist in the Roman world.

VII. A Charge concerning Timothy—6. 3-16.

(*b*) **Verses 3-10. The baneful effects of disputes and the love of money.**

So strong was Paul on the point of maintaining godliness of life under existing conditions, that he says "if any man teacheth a different doctrine and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing."

There were those who thought and taught that godliness was a way of gain, a means of self-enrichment. Such teaching might fall on ready ears in the case of slaves, but the danger was not confined to them alone. So the Apostle passes now to the special evil of the

love of money. "Godliness with contentment," he says, "is great gain." This is a fresh side of the subject of godliness in this Epistle. To be provided with food and covering is sufficient to make us contented. Those who are determined to be rich "fall into a temptation and snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." If the believer reaches after it he is 'led astray from the faith and pierces himself through with many sorrows.' "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have; for Himself said: 'I will in nowise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee'" (Heb. 13. 5, R.V.). "Let me lay up this promise in my heart, and I am a rich man," said Mr. Robert Chapman.

(*c*) **Verses 11-16. The good confession.**

Three words govern the first part of this section: *flee, follow, fight*. Timothy is to *flee* the love of money with all its consequent evils, and to *follow* after "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." The single word rendered "follow after" denotes to pursue, as in the chase, and so carries with it all the earnestness of one who is bent upon the object of his pursuit. Thirdly, he is to *fight* "the good fight of the faith." In any such exhortation we cannot dissociate "faith" from "the faith." It is

called "the faith" because it consists of that which is believed. To fight the good fight of the faith demands the exercise of faith. The Apostle's injunction is very similar to that given by Jude, who exhorts us "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (ver. 3). The faith is not simply an abstraction, it consists of certain facts to which we are to hold fast, and which are declared in the great foundation truths of Scripture. These are the objects of the Devil's unremitting attacks. We are, however, to be on the watch against his efforts to turn us aside from the faith. Our warfare in this respect cannot be carried on without prayer. But more is required than this. We need to maintain a bold confession, and for this we must get to know increasingly the Word of God, and seek His help to handle it aright, so that by a wise handling of its various teachings we may be used to counteract the errors by which the enemy attempts to undermine the faith in the hearts of men. We shall then be supplied with the Divine skill that is required for wielding the Sword of the Spirit.

With the maintenance of a bold confession in view, the Apostle exhorts Timothy to lay hold on eternal life, and reminds him that to this he was called and that he confessed a good confession in the sight of many witnesses. We lay hold on eternal life when we fight the good fight of the faith, and, instead of being ashamed of Christ and of His truth, hold forth

the Word of Life. Laying hold on eternal life is more than enjoying the gift, it is inspired by the prospect of reward at the Judgment-Seat of Christ for faithfulness here below. In Paul's own case the outcome of his having fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, was that he could confidently look forward to receiving the crown of righteousness. In laying hold on eternal life we make for that reward.

Adopting now a still more earnest tone the Apostle charges Timothy "in the sight of God, Who preserveth all things alive (R.V. margin: the same word, while frequently denoting 'to give life,' is used in the Septuagint in Exod. 1. 17, 18, 22, of saving the lives of infants), to keep the commandment without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ", reminding him also of the good confession which Christ witnessed before Pilate. The description of God as the One Who preserveth alive was perhaps intended to convey to Timothy the assurance that He Who had delivered in the past, amidst the dangers consequent upon maintaining the witness, would yet deliver in the future. The good confession which Christ witnessed before Pilate was doubtless His testimony concerning His Kingdom and its character, His own Kingship and the object for which He had come into the world, and it is that witness which leads the Apostle to point on to the time when Christ shall show "Who is the blessed and

only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." There is thus a double testimony of Christ referred to here, His past witness before Pilate, and His future declaration in the Day of His manifested glory. On each occasion His confession consists of testimony concerning the Kingdom.

This statement concerning the Lord Jesus is the last of the four great declarations of doctrine concerning Him in this Epistle. It will be well to recount them here. The first states the object for which He came into the world (1. 15), the second His Mediatorship between God and man and the work He accomplished at Calvary (2. 5, 6), the third His Incarnation, justification, angelic witness, proclamation through the gospel, its resulting effects, and His ascension (3. 16). The fourth tells of His testimony at Pilate's tribunal, and the counterpart to this in the testimony He is yet to give. The faithfulness of Christ then is to be an incentive to us. Faithfulness in witness-bearing is, as we have seen, the key-note to the whole Epistle, though the special aspect of this witness is the responsibility of the local church regarding it.

The mention of the future testimony of Christ concerning God leads the Apostle to state, as he nowhere else does, the inaccessible majesty of God, to Whom alone immortality belongs essentially, underivatively. God, as such, is neither liable to, nor capable of, death. The Son of God could only become capable of death through incarnation. The

argument that, because God cannot die, and yet Christ died, therefore Christ cannot be God, does not hold good at all. It is specious but baseless. Christ, Who was eternally God, one with the Father in Deity (see Isa. 9. 6, Micah 5. 2, *e.g.*) became Man in order to die (Heb. 10. 5-10), and in doing so did not abandon His Deity. As the One Who was both God and Man He both could and did die, and the manner in which He died as recorded in the Gospels bears witness in detail after detail to the supernatural character of His death. God, in the essence of His being and the rights of His majesty is unapproachable and invisible, that is, invisible to the natural eye. He is known to us, and seen by us, only in Christ. Christ is God revealed, the glory of God made visible, the Father manifested and declared.

VIII. Concluding Instructions.—6. 17-*end.*

(*d*) **Verses 17-20. Exhortations to the rich.**

We might have thought that the Epistle would be concluded here, but the Apostle's object is not to declare the nature of God but to enjoin upon his readers the responsibility of maintaining the truth and of living a life consistent with it. He therefore concludes by resuming his exhortations to those who are rich, "to be ready to distribute and willing to communicate," so laying up a store "for the time to come," and laying hold on eternal life.

(*e*) **Verses 20, 21. The final charge to Timothy.**

Timothy is to guard the deposit and to turn away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge falsely so called. Paul is not speaking against science, as we understand the word, but against those philosophic theories and speculations which found their expression in what became known as Gnosticism.

May we seek grace continually to fulfil in these dark and perilous days what is thus enjoined upon us, so that witnessing a good confession unto the end, and cleaving to the Word of God with steadfastness of heart, we may lay hold on eternal life and be true followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

The Second Epistle to Timothy

The Circumstances and Object of the Epistle.

The contents of the second Epistle to Timothy show that the Apostle's circumstances had undergone a change for the worse since his first imprisonment. We do not definitely know what led to his arrest this time. We gather from the Epistle that during his liberty he had visited Troas, Corinth, and Miletus (4. 13, 20). Possibly he had attempted to visit Spain (Rom. 15. 24), but there is no evidence of his actually having done so. In all probability he had visited other towns in Western Asia besides Troas, and if so he would not have failed to go and see Philemon, as he had hoped that through his prayers he would be able to do so (Philemon 21). He also may be regarded as having visited Philippi, to the church at which he had written expressing a confident expectation of being with them again. From the Epistle to Titus it would seem that he had spent a time with him in Crete. His letter to Titus was apparently written from somewhere in Macedonia.

From the first Epistle to Timothy we may conclude that Paul had an expectation of being with him again, but this second Epistle makes it clear that by this time there was no small antagonism against the Apostle in the Province of Asia. He says—and it

was well known to Timothy—that his former companions who were in Asia had turned away from him (1. 15). The likelihood is that instead of visiting Ephesus, he passed over to Achaia, and, having spent a time in Corinth, came eventually to Nicopolis in the Province of Epirus, for he tells Titus that he had determined to winter there. Probably here he was arrested, and from thence brought to Rome under a charge, not now of acting contrary to Jewish Law, but the more serious charge of political intrigue against the Imperial interests, with perhaps the additional accusation of having taken part in a conflagration in Rome.

It would seem that now he was no longer dwelling in his own hired house, but was actually in prison. The approaching crisis of his execution casts its shadow over this Epistle, his last, at least of those recorded in the New Testament. He was 'already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of his departure had come' (4. 6). The letter was no doubt written in the year 67 A.D., and from his desire for Timothy to come to him before the winter (4. 21) we may conclude that it was written in the summer of that year. His faithful medical friend Luke was the only one with him of those who had been his travelling companions. He enjoyed, however, in a special way the realization of the Lord's presence, and was conscious of His unfailing care (4. 17, 18).

The circumstances intimated in this Epistle were, from the human standpoint, gloomy in the extreme. Not only had his erstwhile associates in the Province of Asia turned away from him, but the faith of some was being overthrown by vigorous opponents of the truth (1. 17, 18). Faithless Demas had become worldly. The prospects of the future too were far from encouraging. Grievous times were ahead. There would come a day when men would have a mere form of godliness, having denied the power thereof (3. 1, 5); evil men and impostors would wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived (3. 13); and as for himself the executioner's sword was already bending over him.

Yet, amidst it all, there is through the Epistle a note not only of calmness and confidence but even of triumph, with which he is able to encourage his younger fellow-missionary and strengthen his faith. His feelings of assurance are not worked up in order to prevent Timothy from sinking into despair. The presence and power and love of the Lord Whom he delighted to serve were all too real for that. He is not a mere Stoic, facing his dismal surroundings and prospects with grim determination and heroic fortitude. He has something far higher with which to encourage his fellow-servant. Only the reality of Christ could have caused such a letter as this to be written; only the power of the risen Lord could breathe such messages of inspiring hope and encourage-

ment. It is the strength of his own experiences of the Lord's presence and deliverances and the force of his own example that he brings to bear upon the heart of Timothy, to enable him to meet the tremendous difficulties with which he was faced, and to continue in a spirit of steadfast endurance. He says, "But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; and out of them all the Lord delivered me" (3. 10, 11).

Furthermore, not merely by his own experiences and example does Paul seek to stimulate him, Timothy's source of endurance, faithfulness and victory is in the Lord. If he is not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, but is to suffer hardship with the gospel, it must be "according to the power of God," and because God has given "not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline" (1. 7, 8). If he is to guard the good deposit of the faith, holding fast the pattern of sound words, it must be by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1. 14). The secret of his strength must be "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2. 1). If he is to share in the Apostle's hardships, it must be "as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2. 3). If he is to keep himself free from all that would hinder his service he must be inspired simply by the desire to please Him

"Who had enrolled him as a soldier" (2. 4). The Scriptures that he had known from a child, and which had proved to be his sufficiency hitherto, would still be a means of his continuing in the things he had learned (3. 14, 15).

But it is not only the present power of the Lord that the Apostle brings to bear upon Timothy's life with all its hardship and conflict, there was also the fact of the reward hereafter. Those who endure, they it is who are to reign with Christ. On the ground of these two things, the living power of the Lord and the future glory of His Kingdom, he gives him charge to fulfil his ministry, "preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." He charges him "in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His Kingdom" (4. 1, 2). The brightness of the glory and the reward cheered the old warrior, now nearing his end, inspiring him with undiminished hope and unabated confidence. Holding out these prospects both to Timothy and to all who will be true to Christ, he says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing" (4. 7, 8).

OUTLINE SUBJECTS IN THE EPISTLE.

(I) THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I. **Historical Facts relating to Him**:

1. His First Advent and its Results, 1. 10
2. His Earthly Lineage, ... 2. 8
3. His Death, ... 1. 10; 2. 11
4. His Resurrection, ... 2. 8
5. His Union with His Saints, .. 2. 11
6. His Second Advent and its Results, ... 4. 1, 8, R.V.
7. His Judgment of His Saints, .. 4. 8
8. His Kingdom:
   - (*a*) Its heavenly character, .. 4. 18
   - (*b*) Its earthly manifestation, 4. 1
   - (*c*) Its governing power, .. 2. 12
9. His Judgment of quick and dead, 4. 1

II. **The Centre of**:

1. Divine purposes, ... 1. 9
2. Divine grace, ... 1. 9

III. **The Source of**:

1. Grace, ... 1. 2
2. Mercy, ... 1. 2
3. Peace, ... 1. 2
4. Salvation, ... 1. 10; 2. 10
5. Life, ... 1. 10

IV. **The Object of:**

1. Faith, ... 1. 12, 13; 3. 15
2. Hope, ... 1. 12; 4. 1, 8
3. Love, ... 1. 13
4. Worship, ... 4. 18
5. Prayer, ... 2. 22

V. **The Subject of Testimony**, ... 1. 3

VI. **His Work on behalf of His saints:**

1. The Preserver of His saints, .. 1. 12
2. ,, Observer ,, ,, .. 2. 14
3. ,, Deliverer ,, ,, 3. 11; 4. 18
4. ,, Companion ,, ,, .. 4. 22
5. ,, Rewarder ,, ,, .. 4. 8
6. ,, Avenger ,, ,, .. 4. 14

VII. **His Saints and their devotion to Him.**

They

1. are known by Him, 2. 19
2. know Him, .. 1. 12

} see John 10. 14

3. remember Him, ... 2. 8
4. call on Him, ... 2. 22
5. witness for Him, ... 1. 8
6. suffer for Him, .. 1. 8; 2. 3; 3. 12
7. war a warfare for Him, ... 2. 3

(II) THE GOSPEL

I. testifies of Christ, ... 2. 8
II. is universal, ... 4. 17
III. is the instrument of life and incorruption, 1. 10
IV. involves suffering, .. 1. 8; 1. 12; 2. 9
V. is committed to human instruments, ... 1. 11; 4. 5

(III) THE TRUTH

I. received through repentance, ... 2. 25
II. to be rightly handled, ... 2. 15, R.V.
III. hindrances to receiving, ... 3. 7
IV. error concerning 2. 18
V. withstood, ... 3. 8
VI. repudiated, ... 4. 4

(IV) REFLECTIONS IN VIEW OF DEATH

(Chapter 4. 6).

I. A good fight, ... 4. 7
II. A race won, ... 4. 7
III. A treasure guarded, ... 4. 7
IV. A reward reserved, ... 4. 8

DIVISIONS OF THE EPISTLE.

The following will be a useful way of dividing the Epistle:

I. Introduction, ... 1. 1-5

II. Exhortations to Faithfulness: .. 1. 6 to 4. 8

(1) In view of Timothy's calling, 1. 6-12

(2) ,, ,, the trust committed to him, .. 1. 13 to 2. 2

(3) ,, ,, the character of his service, .. 2. 3-7

(4) ,, ,, reigning with Christ, 2. 8-13

(5) ,, ,, false teachers, .. 2. 14-26

(6) ,, ,, increasing evil in the future, and Timothy's past training, .. 3. 1-17

(7) ,, ,, Christ's Appearing and Kingdom, .. 4. 1-8

III. Messages Concerning the Apostle's Immediate Circumstances, .. 4. 9-18

IV. Conclusion, ... 4. 19-22

OUTLINE NOTES ON THE EPISTLE.

PART I.—INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER 1. 1-5.

(*a*) 1. 1, 2. **Paul's Apostleship.**

In the opening salutation Paul states the Divine origin of His Apostleship, as he does in others of his Epistles, but here he adds that it is "according to

the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus," that is to say, according to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose that life, which was in Christ Jesus in the eternal past, should be given to us. It was consistent with this purpose that Paul should become an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

In the first Epistle he addressed Timothy as his "true child." Here he calls him his "beloved child." Possibly the increased difficulties and trials with which both men were now confronted drew forth the more tender expression.

(*b*) **1. 3-5. Reminders of the Past.**

He next declares that he 'serves God from his forefathers in a pure conscience.' He had always sought to do this when he was an opponent of Christ. He is about to remind Timothy of the faith manifested both by his mother and his grandmother. Paul himself also had an ancestry of those who feared God.

Timothy's last parting from the Apostle had been a sad one. The tears of grief shed on that occasion by the younger man were constantly in Paul's mind and increased his longing desire to be with him again. He was no weakling, or he would never have been entrusted with the arduous responsibilities of pastoral work in Asia. There was an unusually strong tie between these two servants of God. Timothy was Paul's own spiritual child and had served with him in the gospel as a son serves a father. It was not,

however, the remembrance of his companion's sorrow at the time of parting that kindled the yearning of the Apostle to see him again, it was the memory of the unfeigned faith that characterized him, of the continuance of which Paul was assured, now that they were so far apart. Apparently he had been reminded of this by a special message (1. 5).

The fact that Timothy was following in the same path of faith as that of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, forms the basis of the exhortations which the Apostle now has to give him. We shall take the sections of the Epistle as under the headings given above.

PART II.

(1) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of Timothy's calling.*

CHAPTER 1. 6-13.

(*a*) 1. 6, 7. The Imparted Gift.

In speaking of Timothy's own service as a minister of the gospel Paul reminds him of the gift of God which had been imparted to him through the laying on of the Apostle's hands. This was something additional to the faith which had characterized him as a child of God and which Paul has just been

mentioning. The prophetic utterances by which Paul's attention has been guided to Timothy as one raised up for the special service to be entrusted to him, had been followed by this formal act on the Apostle's part, by which the Lord supernaturally bestowed a spiritual gift upon His young servant. The presbytery acknowledged the Divine action through the Apostle by laying on their hands, but that was merely an expression of their recognition. They did not themselves impart anything further to him.

So with regard to all spiritual gifts in the churches. The Divine ordination came first. That is always the Lord's own doing, through the power of the Spirit of God. What followed on the part of the presbytery, or elders, was not an act of ordination but a public acknowledgement on their part of the gift bestowed by God.

Timothy was to stir up—more literally, to kindle into a flame—the gift which had been imparted unto him. There may have been a tendency on his part to shrink from the full discharge of his responsibilities, owing to their heavy and difficult character. But God had not given a spirit of fearfulness. With the gift came the additional bestowments of power, and love and discipline. This latter, *sōphronismos*, differs from *sōphrosunē*—sobriety, or self-control, and denotes more especially a power to shape the character and conduct of others along this line.

(*b*) **1. 8-12. The Hardship Involved.**

With this Divine equipment he need not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, but would be enabled to "suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God" (ver. 8). The gospel does not make a grand outward show. Its method appeals not to the natural man. Its ministry involves hardship, inevitable to all who faithfully proclaim it. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me," said the Lord, and the witness involves a life of suffering on the part of those who bear it, as was the case with the Lord Himself.

This, as the Apostle now shows, was true in His own case. He first recalls the gracious acts of God which lay behind all his service, in order that he may show the true value and high dignity of this life of hardship. God "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel" (vv. 9, 10).

These verses 9 and 10 are

A Compendium of Gospel Facts.

The details may be set out as follows:—

(1) Salvation.

(2) The holy calling.

(3) The basis of the calling:
  (*a*) not according to our works,
  (*b*) according to God's purpose and grace.

(4) The grace of God:
  (*a*) Its origin—in Christ before times eternal.
  (*b*) Its manifestation—in the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus.
  (*c*) Its operation:
    (1) He abolished death.
    (2) He brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel.

What follows after the first statement, that God saved us, sets forth the way in which the salvation has operated, namely in our being called. The calling was founded in God's purposes, and took effect according to His grace, grace both in design and action. The design was eternal, the operation began in the Incarnation of Christ. The appearing mentioned in verse 10 refers primarily to the days of His flesh, though it also may refer to His manifestation to His disciples in resurrection, when, having confirmed their faith, He gave them His gospel commission. His Incarnation was preparatory to His death. In His death He abolished, or brought to naught, death. "By dying, death He slew." In His resurrection, which is here not stated directly, but implied, He brought life and incorruption to light. These are proclaimed in the gospel, and form

an essential feature of the holy calling, for our calling involves both eternal life as the free gift of God in Christ, and incorruption as exhibited in a walk of holiness and righteousness. These are conditioned here by certain limitations, we shall partake of their fullness hereafter.

In verses 11 and 12 Paul shows his own relation to the gospel and the hardships it entails. He mentions

(1) his appointment .. ver. 11
(2) its effects .. .. ver. 12.

As to the appointment, he was made "a preacher (literally, a herald), and an apostle, and a teacher." The words "of the Gentiles" in A.V. do not form part of the Original. As to the effects, he was a sufferer, but his sufferings did not cause him shame. Verse 12 is to be linked with verse 8. Since he was not ashamed, his example was to be an incentive to Timothy to show the same confidence and endurance. Here the Apostle states the mainspring of his confidence. It lay in what Christ was to him. This he speaks of in two ways:

(1) A knowledge of Christ Himself—"I know Him Whom I have believed."

(2) The consequent confidence in His power—"and am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him (literally, my deposit) against that day."

The word rendered "my deposit," R.V., margin, may have two meanings (*a*) 'That which I have committed unto Him' or (*b*) 'that which He has committed unto me' (see margin). The latter is probably the meaning for he is here speaking of the gospel as a trust committed to him (see 1 Tim. 6. 20). The gospel had become part and parcel of himself. He speaks of it as "my gospel." He is a joint partaker with it (1 Cor. 9. 23, R.V.). He could not guard it of his own power any more than he could keep himself. He trusted the Lord to guard it for him till the day when at the Judgment-Seat of Christ he would give an account of his stewardship.

(2) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of the trust committed to Timothy.*

CHAPTERS 1. 13 to 2. 2.

(*a*) **1. 13, 14. The Good Deposit.**

The mention of his relation to the gospel leads him now to exhort Timothy that his relation thereto may be consistent with his own. The exhortation is twofold:

(1) As to the effect of Paul's teaching (ver. 13).
(2) As to the trust committed to Timothy (ver. 14).

As to (1), he is to hold the pattern of sound, or wholesome, words which he had heard of Paul. Paul views his teaching here as an outline, or model, to

which Timothy's teaching is to be conformed. He is to hold the pattern "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," faith Godward, and love manward. His testimony is to be given in faith toward God and in a spirit of love, a love which is not mere sentiment but the outcome of union with Christ.

As to (2), he is to guard 'the good deposit,' but this he could not do of himself, it must be by the power of the indwelling Spirit. The truth was a deposit committed to him. He was not commissioned to produce fresh truth but to maintain what had already been given. The Bible is a complete and permanent revelation of the mind of God. It does not contain a hint as to the possibility of post-apostolic additions to it (see the Appendix, p. 100).

(*b*) **1. 15-18. Faithless Former Friends.**

The Apostle's former associates in Asia had been guilty of defection from him. Two, if not three, are especially named, as if their faithlessness were a particular disappointment to him. His prayer that the Lord may grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus may perhaps indicate that even he also had turned away from him. Yet the Apostle is mindful of his past faithfulness and kindness towards him. He had oft refreshed him and was not ashamed of his chain. He had indeed gone through considerable difficulty to find him out in Rome, and had been diligent in ministering to his needs when in Ephesus. If he

now had followed the others of the Province of Asia in their defection, the Apostle must have felt it the more keenly. He prays, therefore, for his whole household and desires that the Lord may grant to him to find mercy in the day to come, that is, at the time of the Judgment-Seat of Christ. It is possible, of course, that he may be intended to stand out in contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes but he seems to have been a native of Ephesus and, though when the Apostle was there he fulfilled toward him the meaning of his name as "a benefit bearer," he now would be included in the number of whom Paul says that all that were in Asia turned away from him.

In praying the Lord to have mercy on him the Apostle was not, as some have supposed, setting an example of prayers to the dead. There is no actual intimation that Onesiphorus was dead; even if he were, Paul's desire that "he may find mercy of the Lord in that day" would not justify prayers for the dead. The Apostles frequently desired that their converts might receive a full reward at the Judgment-Seat of Christ and that they might not lose the things which they had wrought on their behalf. Mercy granted to them in that day will not depend in any way upon prayers offered for them after they have died. Paul's desire for Onesiphorus, entertained while the latter was living, might quite reasonably be still entertained after his death. To conceive of

the Apostle as offering prayer for his soul is to read into the passage what is not there.

(*c*) 2. 1, 2. Faithful Men—a Contrast.

In contrast to those mentioned in verse 15, and in view of the responsibilities devolving upon Timothy in connection with the trust committed to him, he is charged to respond to the Lord's grace, by which he would be enabled to continue fulfilling them. Not only was he to guard the good deposit himself, but he must commit the truth to faithful men, men who would stand true while others were turning away. "Thou, therefore, my child," says the Apostle, "be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou has heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

He was to open his heart to the Lord so that in that receptive attitude he might receive from Him all that was necessary for the faithful discharge of his duties. Empowered by His grace he was to commit to faithful men what he had received from the Apostle. They were to be men qualified in their turn to teach others also. There is no hint there, or anywhere else in the New Testament, of Apostolic succession. The Apostle is rather arranging for the maintenance and the perpetuation of the faith. Nor is there any intimation, in the charge here given, of a communication of an official right to preach.

Timothy was not commissioned to consecrate men, nor to impart authority to them, he was to hand on the truth as he had received it (see the Appendix, p. 100).

(3) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of the character of his service.*

CHAPTER 2. 3-7.

(*a*) **2. 3, 4. As a Soldier.**

He is exhorted to suffer hardship with Paul "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." A soldier is a whole-timer; he is entirely given up to his military duty. "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life." His great motive is to please the one who has enrolled him as a soldier. In spiritual warfare it is Christ Himself Who gives character to the service and inspires us with the highest possible motive for engaging in it.

(*b*) **2. 5. As an Athlete.**

One who contended in the Greek games was crowned only if he had followed the regulations appointed for the contest. The athlete had to furnish a certificate of Greek birth and to undergo a prescribed course of training, as well as to carry out the rules of the contest itself. So with one who would serve Christ, he must be born of God, must exercise self-control and endurance, and fulfil the Lord's commands as

contained in the Scriptures. In this second illustration the inspiring motive is the reward.

(*c*) **2. 6. As a Husbandman.**

Thirdly, the husbandman character. 'It is the husbandman that laboureth that must be the first to partake of the fruit.' This rendering gives the proper emphasis, which falls on the word "laboureth"; the Apostle is encouraging Timothy to continue in strenuous effort.

(*d*) **2. 7. An Encouraging Promise.**

The three illustrations provide, then, three different incentives. The first is that of pleasing Christ. The second is the obtaining of the reward in the day to come. The third is that of partaking in the fruits of labour. The Apostle closes this part of his exhortation with the command to Timothy to think carefully over what has been said, and with the assurance (see R.V.) that the Lord will give him understanding in all things. He is the source both of strength (ver. 1) and understanding (ver. 7).

(4) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of reigning with Christ.*

CHAPTER 3. 8-13.

(*a*) **2. 8-10. Remembering Christ.**

The Revised Version rendering of verse 8 is important: "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the

dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel." The exhortation is not to remember mere facts about Him, but to remember the Person Himself, as the risen, living One Who became Man. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as being of the seed of David, all the promises given under the first Covenant were confirmed, either actually or potentially. Because He lives the promises are carried into effect in Him and by Him. The servant of Christ is, then, entirely dependent upon Him for the effectivity of his labour, and if he would be a good soldier, a successful spiritual athlete, and a faithful husbandman, he must keep in remembrance the Person in Whose service he is engaged.

All that Christ is was proclaimed in the gospel, and though its proclamation involved sufferings, there were compensations for the man whose soul was in it. (1) He suffered hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor, (2) He rejoiced nevertheless in the freedom and power of the gospel. What mattered it how he suffered, so long as the gospel to which his life was given was making progress? (3) He endured all things for the elect's sake. They were the fruit of the gospel, and his one desire for them was that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. That is, not only that they might be saved, but might receive a full reward hereafter. Probably the statement which follows, "Faithful is the saying," is retrospective and belongs to verse 10 rather than to verse 11.

(*b*) **2. 11-13. Reigning with Christ.**

The mention of eternal glory leads to a statement of the conditions relating to reigning with Christ hereafter. There are three conditions and three results of the fulfilment of them respectively: (*a*) "If we died with Christ we shall also live with Him." As this condition is fulfilled in the case of every believer, the result is assured to everyone. (*b*) "If we endure we shall also reign with Him." Reigning is then conditional upon enduring. We may be in the Kingdom without actually reigning. (*c*) "If we deny Him He also will deny us." Not our salvation! He will never do that. But consistently with His own character He must deny us a reward if we deny Him here. "If we are faithless He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself." He Himself said "Everyone . . . who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 10. 32, 33). The possibilities of eternal rewards, or loss of them, should inspire us with fidelity to Christ.

(5) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of false teachers.*

CHAPTER 3. 14-26.

(*a*) **2. 14, 15. The Right Handling of Scripture.**

Of the things just mentioned Timothy is constantly

to put the saints in remembrance, and to charge them not to engage in profitless and subversive discussions and strife about words. He is to give diligence to present himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the Word of Truth" (2. 15). The word *orthotomeō*, rendered "handling aright," literally means "to cut straight," and probably is a metaphor taken from Paul's own trade as a weaver. In that case it would denote the cutting of a woven material according to the prescribed dimensions or pattern.

(*b*) 2. 16-18. False Teachings.

Timothy's teaching was thus to be in conformity with the pattern comprised in the Word of God. It would thus stand in direct contrast to the profitless strife about words, and, the profane babblings, against which the Apostle warns him here. They proceed further in ungodliness and eat their way amidst a church like a spreading sore (ver. 16).

If the Hymenæus mentioned in verse 17 is the same as in 1 Timothy 1. 20, as seems probable, his denial of a future resurrection shows in what respect he had made shipwreck concerning the faith. Here the effects of his evil teachings are seen, in that he was overthrowing the faith of others.

(*c*) 2. 19. The Foundation and the Seal.

Standing in contrast to men like Hymenæus and

Philetus are those who have the approval of God, who instead of proceeding in ungodliness, depart from unrighteousness. "Howbeit," says the Apostle, "the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

As to the foundation, Paul and Timothy had themselves been laying this in preaching Christ and the truth relating to Him. No matter how great the departure from the faith, no matter how evil the work of false teachers like Hymenæus and Philetus, the foundation stands sure.

By the seal he may be referring to the custom of putting inscriptions on prominent parts of buildings; the seal, however, indicates a sign of proprietorship. There are two parts to the inscription. The one signifies the Lord's ownership, the other the response to it on the part of every one who names His Name. The quotations are taken from the narrative concerning Korah, Dathan and Abiram. In reply to their presumptuous self-will Moses said "The Lord will shew who are His." And when the judgment was about to descend upon them he said to the congregation, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins" (Num. 16. 5, 26).

The Lord's knowledge of His own is not here a matter merely of His omniscience, it is an approving

knowledge, an appreciative discernment of their ways and of their faithfulness. The seal has two tokens, one a confirmatory token and the other a distinguishing one, the former confirming the Lord's claim upon those who name His Name, the latter exhibiting the evidences of it in their departing from unrighteousness. His Name is suggestive of His authority and His character, and those who are truly His show their loyalty to His authority and manifest His character.

(*d*) **2. 20, 21. The Great House and Its Vessels.**

With this in view the Apostle uses the illustration of the great house and its vessels with their varied purposes, some to honour and some to dishonour. We should remember that in speaking of a great house the Apostle is here simply using an illustration and not a metaphor. In the first Epistle, 3. 15, when he speaks of "the House of God, the Church of the living God," His language is metaphorical. Here the case is different. We therefore need to be careful not to press the details (*e.g.*, as to what the great house represents) into an application beyond that which they were intended to bear, lest we miss the point of the Apostle's exhortation. The lesson we are to receive is that we are to keep ourselves pure both in doctrine and practice. Only so can we be vessels "unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." To endeavour

to maintain a union between the Name of Christ and evil is to dishonour the Lord, discredit the Christian faith, and ruin our prospects of reward.

The Apostle warns us to be careful to avoid identifying ourselves with evil, morally or doctrinally, and this necessarily means a path of separation from those who are guilty in either respect. This is not Pharisaical aloofness, but intense loyalty to Christ.

(*e*) 2. 22. What to Flee and What to Follow.

The opposite side is now presented, *i.e.*, association instead of separation. Timothy is exhorted to "flee youthful lusts and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The warnings of this whole section are twofold,—first against evil doctrine, then against evil living. The order is significant. Departure from the truth paves the way for sinful living. Christian conduct is regulated by the Christian faith. Doctrine is never to be studied merely for doctrine's sake. The doctrines of the faith shape the Christian life, and for this reason, that through the teaching of Scripture we increase in the knowledge of God and thereby become conformed to the image of Christ.

We are here taught also that the Christian was not intended to regard himself as an isolated unit. He must identify himself with those who confess the Name of the Lord and worship Him in holiness and sincerity, with a heart free from all corrupt motives.

(*f*) 2. 23-26. The Lord's Servant—His Character and Power.

But while identifying ourselves with such we are to avoid everything that would gender strife (ver. 23). Potent sources of such mischief were the foolish and ignorant questionings pursued by the teachers of error to whom the Apostle has been referring. "The Lord's servant must not strive." Everything in our service is to be regulated by our relation to Him as Lord. "It is enough for the servant that he be as His Master," of Whom it was said "He shall not strive nor cry aloud; neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench" (Matt. 12. 19, 20). We are to find our rule of conduct in His example and "be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves." Only the indwelling Spirit of Christ can enable us so to live and so to conduct ourselves. It is the meek spirit that wins. With this Christ-likeness characterizing us, God's power can work through us to give those who oppose themselves "repentance unto the knowledge of the truth," so that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who have been taken captive by him, and may return unto the will of God.

That is the meaning of the 26th verse, which has been mistranslated in our English texts. The verse literally reads like this: "and that they may return

to soberness out of the snare of the Devil (having been taken captive by him) unto His (God's) will." The pronoun in the Original used for "His" clearly points back to God. It is the Devil who seeks to capture the believer in his snare, and recovery therefrom is recovery to the will of God; for Satan's purpose is ever to prevent us from doing His will. The words in the Revised Version, "by the Lord's servant," are put in to make sense, but they have no place in the Original, nor do they represent its meaning.

(6) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of increasing evil and Timothy's past training.*

CHAPTER 3. 1-17.

(*a*) **3. 1-5. The Men of the Last Days.**

In the third chapter the Apostle passes from evils which were then existent to those which would characterize the end of this age. He predicts that "in the last days grievous times shall come." The people of whose evil characteristics he now gives a list, would appear to fall within the scope of what is called Christendom, for he speaks of them as "holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof." To this last item conditions prevailing within a few centuries after the Apostle's time approximated. A paganized Christianity became a prominent feature in the whole sphere in which the

Christian faith had spread. Though the Reformation restored a measure of purity, it has not prevented a revival of the evil.

An analysed enumeration of the list seems impossible and this may have been intentional, as if to suggest the chaotic condition into which sin plunges communities. The last item but one, "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," may be better rendered, "lovers of pleasure instead of lovers of God." Three outstanding features characterize the whole—selfishness, pride and lack of self-control. While the prediction has had certain fulfilments in time past, it points to a full development of the evil at the end of this age.

The retention of a mere form of godliness is a sign of Satan's craft in getting men professedly to adhere to the Christian faith while yet denying its true power, the power of the Spirit of God, Who leads us to cleave to His Word and glorify Christ. From those who thus turn from God and, while retaining the outward form, deny the real power of godliness, we are to turn away.

(*b*) 3. 6-9. Reprobates and their Dupes.

A particular instance of the evils to which he has just referred was already existent in the Apostle's days. "For of these," he says, "are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with

sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (vv. 6, 7). The word in the Original, rendered "silly women," is literally "womanlings," *i.e.*, women who lack those qualities which should characterize true womanhood—women without discretion, and therefore easily led away with various sorts of desire, whether in the doctrinal sphere or the moral—women captivated by new fangled notions in religion, or led into ungodly practices, with the result mentioned by the Apostle.

In the 8th verse we are given deeper insight into the real character of these people. There is now an intimation of the influence of the powers of darkness who work behind the scenes and lead astray those who, pursuing a self-willed course, follow their own desires instead of the will of God.

Jannes and Jambres were two of the chief spiritists who withstood Moses and the witness given by him. They sought to undermine his testimony by counteracting the signs which he wrought by the power of God. The deceivers of Paul's time were men of this sort, instances of whom are Simon Magus, Elymas the Sorcerer, and the sons of Sceva, men who practised occult arts for the sake of money. Those of whom the Apostle is speaking made a profession of Christianity, just as Jannes and Jambres imitated Moses. The magicians failed under the arresting hand of God, and Timothy is assured, for his encouragement,

that there is to be a similar limit to the actings of the opponents of the gospel, resulting in the exposure of their folly.

(*c*) 3. 10, 11. The Past—Paul's Example and its Effect on Timothy.

In contrast to the apostates of whom he has just been writing the Apostle now reminds Timothy of his past associations with himself—how he followed first his teaching and then his conduct, the faith he maintained and the character he displayed, and finally the persecutions and sufferings he endured. Possibly it was Paul's manner of life that drew Timothy to him from the first. That steadfastness and confidence which characterized their fellowship together in former days was still to be maintained by the younger missionary amidst all his difficulties, and he is reminded of the fact that in every vicissitude in the past the Lord had been the Deliverer, and that He would still manifest His faithfulness and power.

(*d*) 3. 12, 13. The Future—Godliness Suffering, Imposture Increasing.

Moreover, persecution in one form or another is the inevitable lot of those "who would live godly in Christ Jesus" (ver. 12). It is something to be expected but not to be feared. Nay, rather it is the Christian's glory. The Devil can afford to ignore

worldly-minded Christians. Faithfulness to God draws the enemy's antagonism, but the faithful follower of Christ is safe in His keeping.

The evils which had already become conspicuous would continue throughout this age, but with an increased development of wickedness. 'Evil men and impostors would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived' (ver. 13). The principle of Divine retribution is here illustrated. Those who make a profit by the deception of others are themselves enticed through their own devices into grosser forms of evil. The deadly effects of the practice of spiritism, for instance, have been admitted by many a one who has indulged in it. Professing to lead people into touch with spirits in the other world, mediums have found themselves overmastered by the dark power to which they had actually yielded themselves, till they have become complete wrecks.

(*e*) 3. 14-17. The Inspiration and Sufficiency of the Scriptures.

In the 14th verse the Apostle, enjoining upon Timothy to abide in the things which he had learned, encourages him with an implied intimation that in spite of the increase of evil the truth would continue. "Abide thou," he says, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." This verse also contains

another testimony to the finality of Holy Scripture. Paul does not give any indication that Timothy would receive fresh revelations of Divine truth. He is on the other hand to abide in what he has been taught as a result of the assurance of the sources from whence his instruction had been derived. (*See the Appendix.*)

This leads the Apostle to remind him that from his very earliest days he had known the sacred Scriptures. The two sources of instruction are to be associated, namely, the teaching he had received from Paul and the Old Testament Scriptures (ver. 15). Paul thus puts his own teaching on the same level as the inspired writings of the Old Testament, giving evidence of the consciousness manifested in general by the writers of Holy Scripture, that what they wrote came with Divine authority. Not only had Timothy been taught the Word of God by his mother and his grandmother; the Apostle has said in verse 10 that he had followed his teaching. What he is now recalling was in itself a warning against following new-fangled notions and being captivated by spurious teachings given under the guise of Divine truth.

The age has been prolific in such doctrines. The Christian does well to be on his guard against any teaching that is promulgated from suspicious sources, or that is based upon deductions from Scripture instead of the teachings of the Word of God itself. We should note, too, that the Apostle intimates that his teaching was entirely consistent with the Old

Testament Scriptures. Timothy would find that the doctrines of the Christian faith served but to confirm and throw light upon the Old Testament. These Scriptures were "able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." They had not only been instrumental in bringing salvation to him but were of power to maintain him in faithfulness in his ministry, and so to save him from making shipwreck of the faith and turning aside to error.

Timothy's Bible.

Timothy's Bible consisted of the Old Testament only. He was now to observe that there were other Scriptures being produced which were also inspired of God, as for instance the Epistles of Paul himself, which had been written by this time, as well as other books of the New Testament. Whichever translation of the 16th verse is adopted, whether the Authorized Version or the Revised, there is no essential difference between the two, and each is grammatically legitimate. The fact that there are other passages in the New Testament where the Greek word *kai* could not be translated by "also," though the order of the sentence is similar, by no means makes it impossible for *kai* to be translated by "also" in this passage. Each bears testimony to the fact that the Scriptures are God-breathed and are therefore "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction which is in righteousness." The Revised Version lays special stress upon the fact that the Scriptures which are now incorporated in what is known as the New Testament, and which were in process of being produced in Timothy's time, were to be regarded by him as equally of Divine origin, authority and profitableness with the Old Testament Scriptures, which were so familiar to him. The younger missionary would therefore learn to regard Paul's own Epistles as part of the inspired Word of God.

The Apostle likewise bears witness to the absolute sufficiency and completeness of Holy Scripture; by means of the Word of God the "man of God," a title which should characterize every believer, may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (see the Appendix, p. 100).

(7) *Exhortations to faithfulness in view of Christ's appearing and Kingdom.*

CHAPTER 4. 1-8.

(*a*) 4. 1, 2. The Charge to Preach the Word.

The seventh motive for faithfulness is the future appearing of Christ, the coming of His Kingdom, and the judgment which He will exercise. The charge is concerning faithfulness in the ministry, and is

given, firstly, "in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead," and, secondly, "by His appearing and by His Kingdom." The Authorized Version here supports the erroneous idea that Christ is going to judge the living and the dead together at His appearing and His Kingdom. The Scriptures nowhere teach that the judgment of the living and the dead will be simultaneous. The judgment of the living will take place when the Lord comes to receive His Church to Himself, and will be exercised at the "Judgment-Seat of Christ," when every believer will have the counsels of his heart made manifest and every one will have his praise from God (1 Cor. 4. 5). The judgment of the dead is not a matter of reward but of condemnation and will take place after the 1000 years of the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth (Rev. 20. 5). The Revised Version has given the correct rendering of 4. 1, which is consistent with the teaching of the rest of Scripture on the subject. The charge to Timothy is, as we have noted, given "in the sight of God and of Christ" and in view of the fact that He is to be the Judge of all men, first the living and then the dead, and is further given by reason of His appearing and the establishment of His Kingdom. The life of the believer should ever be lived in view of these things. They need to be kept constantly in mind, as they have an all important

bearing upon the character, effects and issue of all our service.

On these grounds Timothy was to "preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season." He was to seize every opportunity of enforcing the truth, without regard to the prejudices of those who were likely to oppose it, and without seeking to avoid the hardships consequent upon his testimony. He was to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (4. 2). That which called for reproof required to be dealt with, not in a spirit of irritability and indignation, but with all forbearance, and with a readiness to apply diligently the teaching of the Word of God, meeting every case with its instruction and so using the Holy Scriptures to the profit of his hearers.

(*b*) **4. 3, 4. The Reason for the Charge.**

The Apostle next gives a special reason for this in that the time would come when, doubtless as a result of the work of the false teachers and their influence, people would not endure the sound doctrine, but "having itching ears" would "heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts," turning away their ears from the truth and turning aside unto fables (vv. 3, 4). The word rendered "time" is *kairos*, which denotes an epoch, or season, characterized by one or more special features. When people turn away from the truth they desire to listen to teachers

who will suit their own fancies; for the human mind naturally craves for something to feed upon, and, in abandoning the truth, is ready to receive any and every false notion that may be advanced.

How fully the Apostle's predictions were realized is seen in the history of the post-apostolic times. The legendary and fabulous stories of the lives and miraculous deeds of the saints, held the attention of people in the churches of Christendom far more than the Scriptures of truth. They veritably departed from the Word of God and turned aside unto fables. The desire for this kind of thing is one of the features of ecclesiastical history during the mediæval ages. The tendency has taken on a particular phase in the past hundred years in the inclination to regard considerable portions of the Bible as mythological or allegorical.

(*c*) 4. 5. The Charge Re-enforced.

In view of the dangers ahead Timothy is exhorted 'to be sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfil his ministry' (ver. 5). He is to show an example of sobriety, in contrast to the spiritually stupefying effects of false teachings, to be steadfast in enduring the hardship which faithfulness to the truth involved, and, while engaging in pastoral work, is still to continue his service as an evangelist.

(*d*) 4. 6-8. The Additional Reason—the Crown of Righteousness.

The motive for faithfulness which we are now considering is further taken up with relation to the Apostle's own expectation of a reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He states that he is 'already being poured out as a drink offering and that the time of his departure has come.' Upon the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire they were to pour out a drink offering of a certain measure of strong wine, an indication of the Divine satisfaction in the completed sacrifice (Exod. 29. 40). Paul's whole life since his conversion had been devoted as a sacrifice to the service of God, and now, conscious of the Divine acceptance of his sacrifice, he views his death as the pouring out of the drink offering upon it. Every phrase he uses speaks of confidence and triumph. The metaphor he employs for his departure is that either of striking a tent by a traveller who is going on a journey, or of the loosing of a vessel from its moorings preparatory to setting sail.

His view of the death he was about to endure is in keeping with his following words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day." His look is first retrospective and then prospective. As to the past there is no expression of regret, no sighing for what

might have been, no "longing, lingering, look behind." As a warrior his warfare has been well waged, as a racer his course has been completed, as a guardian of the faith he has kept his treasure to the end. In consequence he is able to look forward joyfully and confidently to receive the crown of righteousness at the time when Christ, the Judge of the living, as he has already said, shall mete out His rewards to those who have been faithful.

He is renewing his reference to the Grecian games, where the victor received a crown of laurel leaves. Paul looked forward to an unfading crown, a crown of righteousness, that is to say, the rightly adjusted reward for faithful service.

It is characteristic of the Apostle that he invariably thinks of others while speaking of his own interests. While looking forward to his own reward, he rejoices in the thought of the great company of those who are likewise to be the recipients of the crown of righteousness. The definite article before the word "crown" suggests both the certainty of the reward and the exact measure of the recompense to be bestowed by Him Whose estimate is impartial and unerring. It is to be given "to all them that have loved His appearing," to all those, that is, who, like the Apostle, have fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith in fidelity to Christ. The perfect tense "have loved" carries the thought

retrospectively from the future time of the Judgment-Seat of Christ, where the review of the past will take place.

PART III.

Messages Concerning the Apostle's Immediate Circumstances.

CHAPTER 4. 9-18.

(*a*) 4. 9, 10. An Urgent Invitation, and the Reason.

Drawing now towards the close of his Epistle, and in giving one or two final instructions, Paul first alludes to some of those who had been his associates, and then to his experiences before the Imperial Tribunal. He earnestly desires Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, since various brethren who had been with him had left him, and only Luke remained. Demas had actually forsaken him being turned aside by the love of this world. There is no indication that he was an apostate from the Christian faith. He seems to have been actuated simply by a desire for worldly advantage or comfort. He would, however, not be much good to the church in Thessalonica whither he had gone.

(*b*) 4. 11-13. Special Instructions.

Timothy is to take Mark and bring him with him. The verb in the Original implies that Mark was

staying at some place along the journey which Timothy would take in going to Rome. That Mark had been at Rome previously to this is to be gathered from the statement that he was useful to the Apostle for ministering,—a touching issue to the difficulty that had arisen between Paul and Barnabas years before in connection with Mark's decision to leave them on this first missionary journey. Barnabas had taken his nephew to Cyprus, and we know little further about him than what is now intimated in this Epistle. The Lord had found use for him, though he probably was brought again into contact with Paul only in his later years of service. "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (Job 14. 7). Paul felt that he had reason for the cutting down but rejoiced in the fresh sprouting of the tender branch.

It would seem as if Timothy was not actually at Ephesus when this letter was written, for Paul says that he had sent Tychicus there, and it is unlikely that he would give Timothy this information if Tychicus were in the same place. Possibly he may have been at Troas. He was to bring the cloak with him that Paul had left behind with Carpus. The cloak would doubtless be needed in view of the winter then near at hand (ver. 21). The idea that it was a light mantle for wrapping up books is not sufficiently substantiated to be regarded as likely.

The books and the parchments which were also the Apostle's possessions were likewise to be brought. The parchment would probably contain portions of Scripture, and it may be some of his own letters.

(*c*) 4. 14, 15. A Bitter Opponent.

Timothy is now warned to beware of Alexander the coppersmith, who had evidently been keenly antagonistic to the Apostle. Possibly he was the same individual who was mentioned in the first Epistle with Hymenæus (1 Tim. 1. 20). If so Paul's disciplinary treatment had apparently roused his fierce indignation. We have to remember, however, that Alexander was a very common name, and to identify him with the man of the same name in the first Epistle is only surmise. The fact that Paul immediately refers to his first defence suggests that perhaps Alexander's opposition had some connection with his trial at Rome. He leaves the man in the hands of the Lord, simply warning Timothy against him as an opponent of the truth.

(*d*) 4. 16, 17. The First Defence in the Last Trial.

By his first defence is to be understood his first appearance before the Imperial Tribunal in connection with his last trial, not of course in connection with his former two years' confinement when he dwelt in his

own hired house. The probable reference is to a twofold charge laid against him, firstly, perhaps, of taking part in the conflagration in Rome, and, secondly, of treason against the Imperial authority. The whole attitude taken up by Christians was necessarily so contrary to Roman customs that they were always liable to charges of this sort. Whatever the first accusation was, the danger was so great that everybody forsook him, a desertion for which an account would have to be given to God. Yet such was Paul's Christlike spirit that he prays for them that it may not be reckoned against them. The Lord Jesus Himself, of Whose presence and delivering power the Apostle had again and again had experience, now stood by him and strengthened him. Was not His faithful servant only following in the footsteps of his Master, Who, on the night of His betrayal, was forsaken by all His disciples, themselves the subjects of His prayer?

Evidently on the occasion of this trial he seized the opportunity afforded by his speech in his own defence to give a complete gospel testimony. The trial would undoubtedly be attended by a large number of people, especially if held, as seems likely, in one of the courts of the Forum in Rome. The Lord, Who was standing by Him, gave power to the message, and at the same time caused that he should be granted deliverance. It is not necessary to suppose, from his reference to the mouth of the lion, that he was

actually likely to be thrown to the lions in the arena. The probability is that he is using a common metaphorical expression.

(*e*) **4. 18. Confidence to the End.**

Past mercies strengthen the assurance of future deliverance. Paul was conscious that the Lord would still deliver him. This is quite consistent with his expectation of the sentence of death. His meaning apparently is that the Lord would maintain him to the end, confirming him in faithful testimony in spite of all opposition, and giving him a full and glorious issue thereto in His heavenly Kingdom. The power of the Lord in this respect, and the future prospect of the Kingdom, draw forth his last written doxology.

PART IV.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER 4. 19-22.

IN giving his closing salutation to some of those who had been his former companions in service the Apostle also makes mention of two others, namely, Erastus, of whom he says that he "abode at Corinth"—a proof that Paul had been travelling about since his first imprisonment (Erastus seems to have been a native of Corinth, Rom. 16. 13), and Trophimus, whom he

had left sick at Miletus. This may seem somewhat strange, considering that the Apostle possessed the gift of healing (see Acts 19. 11, 12; 28. 8). While such supernatural gifts were bestowed to confirm the work of the gospel, there were limitations as to its exercise. The Apostles' use of the gift was not directed by their own wishes. They were acting simply as the Lord's servants and their power was controlled by their Master, and not by their personal affections or desires. The healing was accomplished by faith, but faith-healing was not practised as an art.

There follow salutations from Pudens, Linus and Claudia, attempts to identify whom have not been satisfactory, but who, though then living in Rome, had evidently a previous connection with churches in Asia.

Paul's closing benediction is twofold, first upon Timothy himself and then upon those also who were with him. To Timothy he says "the Lord be with thy spirit." He had reminded him in the beginning of his letter that God had imparted not a spirit of fearfulness but of power and love and discipline. His benediction is therefore in keeping with this and the whole tenor of the Epistle. In the "grace be with you," "you" is plural.

This was probably the last written message from the Apostle's pen. Shortly after this letter was sent he laid down his life under the stroke of the

executioner's sword, outside the city of Rome, at a place which is now known as the Three Fountains. There is a spot about half way between this and the city where the visitor is pointed to the grave of the faithful servant of the Lord to whom was committed the high privilege of doing more in missionary service than any other save the Lord Himself.

Appendix.

ON THE SUFFICIENCY AND FINALITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WE meet not infrequently with the opinion that the Bible was not intended to be a complete and sufficient guide in matters of doctrine and practice throughout the present era. Some hold that, while the Scriptures are of Divine origin and authority, they were not a final revelation, and that the authority of the Church would be such as to provide for additional doctrines and guidance in worship. Others hold that truths essential for Christians in the early days may not be essential in the changed circumstances of modern times; in other words, that the advance of civilisation has made much of the apostolic teaching out of date.

We shall not now discuss in detail the question of the completeness of the canon of the Scriptures, or the validity of other writings and their claim to inspiration. No proof has ever been produced that apocryphal books or any writings other than those of the Bible are of Divine inspiration and authority. That such have no right to a place in the Word of God is invariably self-evident and has been sufficiently established.

The Epistle of Jude declares that the faith was

once for all delivered unto the saints (ver. 3). "Once for all" is the correct translation as in the Revised Version, not, 'once', as in the Authorized Version, which might mean 'once upon a time'. The Greek word *hapax* will not bear that meaning, which is represented by *pote*. Since the faith has been delivered "once for all," it is obvious that it was never the Divine intention for it to receive addition or modification. "The faith" is the body of doctrine committed to the Church, for its adherence thereto and for its maintenance. It is contained in the Bible as we have it handed down to us. To attempt to add to it, or readjust it, or to issue additional decrees as if they were of Divine authority, is to impugn the perfect work of the Holy Spirit of God and to be guilty of presumptuous impiety. Doubtless with this in view a warning against tampering with Scripture in any way is given three times in the Book. The first is in the injunction given to Israel, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it" (Deut. 4. 2; 12. 32). The second is the utterance of Agur, "Every word of God is tried: . . . Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30. 5, 6). Thirdly, at the close of the Apocalypse the warning is "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto

him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" (Rev. 22. 18, 19). This last refers, of course, immediately to the contents of the Apocalypse, but taking the three passages together here enumerated they constitute a prohibition of any attempt to extend or diminish any of the contents of the entire volume of the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul, as we have seen in the preceding pages, clearly intimates to Timothy the finality and permanency of Scripture. He instructs Timothy to give a charge that no other doctrine was to be taught (1 Tim. 1. 3). He is to "hold the pattern of sound words" which he had heard from the Apostle. He was to guard, through the Holy Spirit, that which had been committed to him (2 Tim. 1. 13, 14). The things which he had heard from Paul he was to commit to faithful men that they might be able to teach others also" (2. 2). The duty devolving upon him therefore was to maintain truth. It was not given to him to produce more. He was to pass on that which had already been given, and to handle aright that which constituted "the Word of truth" (2. 15).

The Apostle again predicates the absolute sufficiency of Scripture, in 2 Timothy 3. 16, 17. See the notes

on that passage (p. 84). In declaring both that it is God-breathed, and that thereby "the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work," he enforces not only the Divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, but also their finality in doctrine. Certainly if the man of God can by their means be "complete and completely furnished unto every good work", no additional doctrine was required, or was to be expected. The Apostles constantly warn believers to abide in the teaching already given them. John says, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John 2. 24); and Paul, "Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do" (Phil. 4. 9); "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned" (2 Tim. 3. 14). See also 1 Timothy 6. 20.

Certain teachings in 1 Corinthians have been regarded by some as applicable merely to the church to which the Epistle was addressed. It was written, however, not only to the church at Corinth, but to "all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1. 2). Many of its teachings are foundations of the faith, and what was of local application contains principles essential for churches at all times. As to the injunctions given in the 14th chapter concerning the conduct and arrangements of church meetings, concerning, for instance, oral

ministry, the exercise of gift, the silence of women, etc., the Apostle says that the things which he was writing were "the commandment of the Lord" (14. 37). Again he says that what he is inculcating in that church is what he teaches in every church (4. 17 and 7. 17).

Isaiah had warned Israel against giving ear to any utterance inconsistent with what they had received, even should the message come from a supernatural source. "To the law and to the testimony!" says the prophet, "if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isa. 8. 20). And of the gospel, Paul says, "But though we, or an angel from Heaven, should preach any other gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1. 8). Both prophet and apostle lead us to bring everything to the test of Holy Scripture, and either to accept or reject whatever is taught, as it is in accordance with, or contrary to, the Divine Word.

The Apostle John insists upon adherence to Christ's teaching: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If anyone cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting" (2 John 9, 10). It

imposes an undue limitation on the words "the teaching of Christ" to make them refer merely to one doctrine concerning Him. The Apostle has been speaking of "the truth . . . which shall be with us for ever" (vv. 1, 2), and of "His commandments" (ver. 6). "The teaching of Christ" is all the Divine revelation concerning Him.

The same writer makes a startling claim for the teaching given by himself and his fellow-apostles, a claim which, were it not valid, would be nothing short of presumption, but which, in point of fact, bears witness both to his Divine authority and the completeness of the doctrines of Scripture. He says, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4. 6). From this, obviously, the teachings of the Apostles are the standard by which to judge what is true or false in doctrine. Therefore what is not corroborated by the New Testament has not the authority of God.

There is a striking indication in the Epistle to the Colossians that the Scriptures give a complete body of doctrine in regard to the Christian faith, and that there was no further doctrine to be added thereto. When the Apostle speaks of his 'fulfilling the Word of God' (chap. 1. 25), he is referring, not to the fulfilment of his gospel service, but to the stewardship he had

received from the Lord in regard to the completion of the faith. The last great foundation truth of the Word of God to be given by special revelation was the mystery of the union between Christ and the Church. It was especially given to Paul to reveal this mystery, which had been hidden, he says, from all ages and generations. The truth relating to the Church as the Body of Christ was the crowning arch of the whole edifice of Divine truth. In making it known the Apostle was in a special sense fulfilling the Word of God. It was not that there were no further communications to be made by the Spirit of God in regard to the completion of the Scriptures. Other parts of the New Testament were written after the Epistles in which Paul sets forth this mystery. But those later parts of the New Testament only supplemented truth which had been given previously. What the Apostle John, for instance, communicated in the Apocalypse was new in one respect but was not a new kind of truth. It extended themes which had been already mentioned in other parts of the Word of God. But the truth of the mystery committed to Paul was altogether new, it was the completion of the doctrines of the faith.

In holding to the truth of the permanency of the Scriptures we must distinguish between things that differ. The whole Volume consists of the complete revelation of the mind of God for His people, yet

there is a progress in the revelation. A distinction must be made, for instance, between the principles of the worship and religion appointed for Israel under the Law of Moses and those appointed for the churches in the present age. The ceremonies and ritual pertaining to the tabernacle were not intended to remain in vogue in the worship of the Church. The priests were an exclusive class in Israel, belonging to the tribe of Levi; in the Church every believer is a priest: "Ye . . . are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices": "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2. 5, 9). "He made us . . . priests unto His God and Father" (Rev. 1. 6).

Again, the holy places and observances of the tabernacle were only "a figure (or parable) for the time now present," and the ordinances were "carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9. 9, 10). That reformation came when the sacrifice of Calvary had been offered. Since the death of Christ "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands," "neither is worshipped with men's hands" (Acts 7. 48; 17. 24). "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth" (John 4. 24). As Christ has entered, "not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into Heaven itself," we have boldness to enter by faith into the unseen holiest by His blood,

no matter where or what the earthly gathering place is (Heb. 9. 24; 10. 19) The rites and ceremonies under the Law were "the example and shadow of the heavenly things" (8. 5).

The Law, "having a shadow of the good things to come," . . . could never make them that drew nigh to God perfect (10. 1). How futile to be occupied with the shadows when the substance has come! "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second" (10. 9). By one offering Christ has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "The Law made nothing perfect" (10. 14; 7. 19).

There is no sufficiency in the Law to provide eternal life, nor can the ritual, which fulfilled its purpose in the old dispensation, enable us to offer acceptable worship to God in the present age. The Law "was added because of transgressions," till Christ should come. It has been "our tutor . . . unto Christ" (Gal. 3. 19, 24). "There was therefore a disannulling of the commandment going before . . . and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh to God" (Heb. 7. 18, 19). "By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." "I through the Law," says the Apostle, "died to the Law (*i.e.*, as a means of justification and life) that I might live unto God. That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2. 16, 20). "As many as are of the works of

the law are under the curse" (3. 10). No longer as a means of life is the command given, "This do and thou shalt live." The gospel order is 'live and do this.' Life comes by faith in Christ, and then, "under law to Christ," we learn to do His will. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 8. 2).

At the same time the Law itself is not abrogated. "The Law is good, if a man use it lawfully," that is to say, not as a means of obtaining salvation; for "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tim. 1. 8, 9).

Accordingly, while abiding by the teaching of the Scriptures, we are to have due regard to the differences between the age under the Law and the present era of grace. By the Word of God we are to be judged hereafter; for it is given as the standard of our life and for our "obedience to the faith." How important therefore, it is for us to see that our ways are directed to keep His precepts, both in private life and in dealings with our fellow-men! How important, too, that in matters relating to the Church we should follow, not the traditions of men, but the Scriptures of truth! Being the handiwork of the Spirit of God, Who Himself has come to guide us into all truth, the Scriptures are infallible counsellors. There is no circumstance in our life concerning which they fail to give Divine light and direction. Sufficient and final as the complete Word of God, they should be

final for us in everything in the regulation of all our affairs. Let our appeal ever be, "What saith the Scripture?" And, having received an answer, be it ours to say, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." Thus in the fulfilment of His "good acceptable and perfect will" shall we be able to say with Paul, "I have kept the faith," and look forward with confidence to receive from our Lord His commendation, "Thou didst keep My Word, and didst not deny My Name."

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